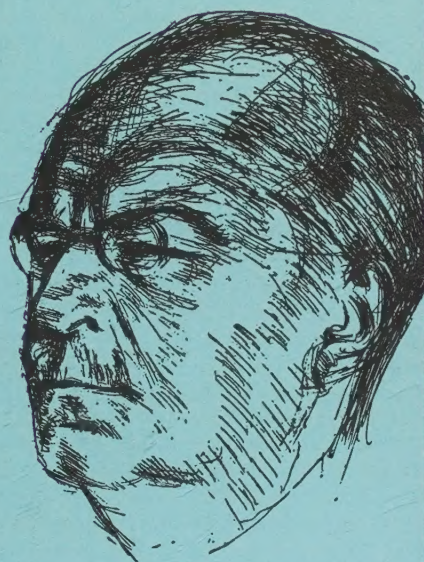


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# GAZETTE DES BEAUX-ARTS

JULY—DECEMBER 1944

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## MELANGES HENRI FOCILLON

OTTO BENESCH, MILDRED BLISS, ETHEL BURNET CLARK, KENNETH JOHN CONANT, W. G. CONSTABLE, WALTER W. S. COOK, SUMNER McKNIGHT CROSBY, S. L. FAISON, JR., GEORGE HEARD HAMILTON, FRANCOISE HENRY, PHILIP HOFER, EDWARD ALDEN JEWELL, FISKE KIMBALL, GEORGE KUBLER, GENEVIEVE MARCH-MICHELI, ULRICH A. MIDDELDORF, AGNES MONGAN, SIRARPIE DER NERSESSIAN, ERWIN PANOFSKY, DUNCAN PHILLIPS, JOHNNY ROOSVAL, JAMES J. RORIMER, PAUL J. SACHS, CLAUDE SCHAEFER, CHARLES SEYMOUR, CHARLES SEYMOUR, JR., JEAN J. SEZNEC, FRANCIS HENRY TAYLOR, JOHN S. THACHER, HANS TIETZE, ERICA TIETZE-CONRAT, LIONELLO VENTURI, ASSIA R. VISSON, GEORGES WILDENSTEIN, EDGAR WIND.

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GAZETTE  
DES  
BEAUX-ARTS

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EIGHTY-SIXTH YEAR—SIXTH SERIES  
VOLUME TWENTY-SIX

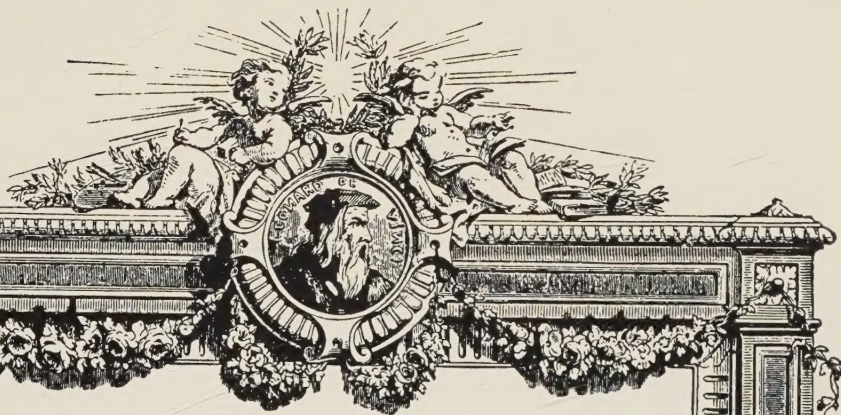


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BEAUX-ARTS

Founded in 1859 by Charles Blanc  
*published and edited by Georges Wildenstein*

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86th year

1944

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## INTRODUCTION

THE publication of the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," interrupted after eighty years of continuous existence when France entered one of the darkest periods of her history, was resumed in New York in 1942. This American edition belongs to the many activities which Henri Focillon, on his last assignment with the Free French forces in exile, devotedly sponsored and assisted — in spite of his already precarious state of health — because he recognized their value in the service of our science, of France's prestige, and of world peace. Therefore, the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts" felt the duty of commemorating that great patron of its American edition, by dedicating to him a special volume contributed exclusively by the friends and pupils of Henri Focillon outside of France.

It was originally hoped that the volume would be ready for publication in 1944. The realization of this project was hampered by our justified ambition to assure participation in this tribute of the largest possible number of adequate contributors whom the war had prevented from responding promptly to our invitation, as well as by various technical delays also resulting from the war. This explains the interval between the serial date of the volume and the actual date of publication. As the present volume of *Mélanges Henri Focillon* is being sent to press, we wish to make public excerpts from letters which Henri Focillon wrote to us in difficult days of the revival of the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts" in the United States. May this volume bear witness to our everlasting gratitude for all that the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts" has owed in the past to her great contributor and friend — Henri Focillon — and also for all the precious gifts which, to the last days of his struggle against death, the author of *l'An Mil* intended for the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts" — that "*vieille force française*," as he called this review.

G. W.



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## LETTERS

New Haven, Conn.

25 Juin 1942.

*Cher Monsieur Wildenstein,*

*Je tiens à vous dire sans tarder que votre magnifique lettre me touche profondément. J'y trouve l'expression renouvelée et particulièrement affectueuse d'une sympathie dont vous m'avez déjà donné bien des marques. Et je veux surtout vous remercier de rendre la vie à la "Gazette des Beaux-Arts": je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire combien nous sommes tous attachés à cette vieille force française et à son siècle de gloire — ou presque. Je pourrais vous aider beaucoup plus si ma santé n'était pas actuellement déplorable, et si je ne devais partager mon reste de forces entre des devoirs nombreux qui, comme celui-là, sont tous impérieux et pressants. Mais nous maintiendrons la France aux Etats-Unis en attendant de la refaire chez elle ce qu'elle était et plus belle encore. Je voudrais avoir la puissance et la pureté que vous me donnez pour pouvoir accomplir cette oeuvre sans défaut. Mais l'amitié de mes amis est mon plus grand privilège. J'ai déjà puisé en elle la force de ne pas mourir. J'espère que nous pourrons nous voir bientôt. Vous savez que vous serez le bienvenu à New Haven.*

*Dites, je vous prie, à Madame Georges Wildenstein que nous pensons à elle avec amitié, et présentez-lui mes hommages les plus respectueux. Croyez bien, cher Monsieur et Ami, à mes sentiments très cordialement et très sincèrement dévoués.*

*Henri Focillon*

*Harkness Pavilion,  
New York, 21 Octobre 1942.*

*Cher Monsieur,*

*Mon mari trouve la "Gazette" superbe. Il l'a regardée, admirée, humée; je crois même qu'après avoir étudié les images il a commencé à lire le texte. Il a eu*



*plaisir à voir que Sterling et Charles Seymour, Jr. étaient donnés comme ses disciples. . . .*

*. . . Assia a téléphoné. Elle semble vaillante déjà et impatiente de se remettre au travail. Bientôt mon mari aura le droit de recevoir et je vous ferai signe, cher Monsieur. Je crains bien que nous n'ayons à rester ici plus longtemps que ne le désire mon mari. Son médecin a vraiment déjà obtenu une amélioration si nette qu'il nous faut nous laisser guider par lui sans impatience et avec la certitude d'être dans des mains si sûres.*

*Toutes nos meilleures pensées. Toutes les amicales félicitations de mon mari, tous ses vœux. Lui aussi voudrait bien pouvoir vous envoyer un bel article.*

*Marguerite H. Focillon*

*New Haven, Conn.  
10 Décembre 1942.*

*Cher Monsieur et Ami,*

*Ne doutez pas du grand plaisir que j'aurai à collaborer à la "Gazette," comme vous me le demandez si gracieusement. Il me semble que c'est un devoir d'amitié, et vous venez de me témoigner la vôtre en prenant la peine de me retrouver et de me faire copier des articles que naguère vous aviez recueillis dans votre belle Revue.*

*J'aurais voulu vous envoyer dès aujourd'hui un fragment de l'An Mil, mais je n'ai de réellement prêt que des chapitres purement historiques et la partie art a déjà paru dans la "Revue Archéologique." Dès que je pourrai avancer mon travail de ce côté, ce sera pour vous. . . .*

*. . . J'oubliais de vous redire quel plaisir ému j'ai éprouvé à voir le premier numéro de la "Gazette" ressuscitée des ombres. Je vous félicite de tout mon coeur, je vous remercie et je vous envoie pour elle et pour vous tous les vœux de votre vieil ami,*

*Henri Focillon*

*Peut-être pourrions-nous trouver quelque autre sujet que l'An Mil. Si j'ai de la peine à aboutir de ce côté, je vous soumettrai quelques projets d'articles.*



# HENRI FOCILLON AND YALE\*

**F**ORTUNATE indeed is that institution served by the devotion of scholars who have dedicated themselves to the cultivation of the mind and the spirit, and who by the example of their own unflagging intellectual self-discipline, by their energy and enthusiasm, inflame their colleagues and pupils with a sense of the sacred obligation of their calling. They are truly immortal, not merely in their published works of scholarship, but equally in the faithful loyalty of the disciples who follow them. Such devotion Henri Focillon brought to each of the institutions of learning in which he served, and in such full measure as to enrich not only the institution itself but a multitude upon its borders.

He came to Yale at a moment when the American universities were beginning to open their eyes to the menacing effects of postwar materialism. We stood in danger of thoughtlessly educating our youth, upon the basis of utilitarian standards, to a cynical disregard of the esthetic and spiritual values without which man ceases to be civilized. We needed a stimulus and a guide to the artistic efforts of our students; we needed still more a leader who would show us how an appreciation of the beautiful in the past and in the present might be expanded throughout the whole extent of our educational and social experience so as to provide a working philosophy of life. To France we sent a call: "Come over and help us."

That help Focillon brought us, as scholar and teacher, but also and immediately as academic colleague in residence in the University community. Within a few weeks of his arrival at Yale he had become — always to remain for our students — the "patron." He poured out for their benefit his catholic qualities of the critic, esthetic connoisseur, metaphysician, poet. But he thought of himself always and, I suspect, wished to be regarded as historian. Like all great historians he habitually related the particular to the general and the past to the present. His own studies and the influence which he exerted upon his pupils were characterized by a profound humanism, by a vibrant interest in every aspect of the creative potentialities of mankind. His curiosity as to the movements and trends of his own time was nothing less than passionate, especially as they related to the ideas of the past.

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\* The substance of these paragraphs was first spoken at the Memorial Meeting for Henri Focillon held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art on May 3, 1943.



This quality inspired him to an adventurous and fearless will to pioneer in new fields of interpretation and to apply to the facts of history new criteria of understanding.

The hard facts of history, it goes without saying, he never evaded. He had for them an undeviating respect which gave solid power to his presentation of the poetical or the fantastic aspects of historical tradition. He brought to our University studies the liberalism of French XIX Century scholarship as expressed in the intellectual activity of the Ecole Normale and the Collège de France; it emphasized the necessity of a scientific historical method based upon pure reason, but only as a means to an end: the comprehension of the spiritual, intangible values which transcend the purely intellectual. Very few historians can express those values. That Henri Focillon could do so, resulted chiefly from his feeling for artistry and his poetic sensitivity. Thus with his help our students began to learn the meaning of what we call the Liberal Arts. To him and to the France which produced him our debt is eternal.

CHARLES SEYMOUR.







# HENRI FOCILLON

## AN APPRECIATION

IT is a singular privilege to be invited to contribute to this memorial volume of the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*. But this is not a learned paper — it is a page of affection and estimate of a friend and master. The reason I have been asked is that in point of time and seniority I was Henri Focillon's first American pupil — the only one in that original group of twenty-odd students from nearly as many countries who joined him in the autumn of 1924 when he came to the Sorbonne. Emile Mâle had been called to Rome to the Farnese Palace and the Faculty of Letters had turned to Lyons where they were attracted by the distinguished reputation of Focillon as museum director, teacher and man of letters.

At that time the *Patron* had no idea of coming to America. His primary concern was the establishment of a vigorous curriculum in the history of art at the University of Paris, a curriculum in which the work of art itself would be more precious than its photograph. The physical realization of this project was the *Institut d'Art et d'Archéologie de l'Université de Paris*. Its fulfillment lay in the publications of the master and his pupils. Focillon's philosophy of art shines through the pages of his transcendent prose; he gave to archaeology the very breath of contemporary life and to his criticism of the art of his own time he gave the endless riches of a well stored and disciplined knowledge of the past. Iconography to him was no more than a means of establishing communication with the thoughts and prayers of artists of an earlier day. It was never a *jeu de patience* based upon the theory of identical twins; and he never resorted to iconological devices unless by the comparison of images he could add to our knowledge of man and his spiritual life.



But Henri Focillon was neither a theorist nor an esthetician: he was first a patriot and secondly a bourgeois. If he was vouchsafed a more penetrating vision into the inner purpose of the artist, that vision was always tempered by the acid of his wit and the *bon sens* with which he had been born. His appetites, thank God, were earthy. He had more moral courage than any man I ever saw and gave no heed to the warnings of his physicians when it came to putting his convictions to the test. During the dark days of occupation Henry Focillon was the voice of France abroad — the France for which he died. Yet on his death bed his parting admonition to me was "*Méfiez-vous, mon ami, de l'esthétique — j'en ai fait trop dans ma vie.*" Art with him, you see, was essentially a practical journeyman's affair.

It was Focillon the man that gave such a lift to the students at Yale and elsewhere in America even when at first they scarcely understood him. They felt his magnetism and his charm. Soon they learned that what the *Patron* had to teach them was no mere embroidery upon the academic gown but the flesh and blood of art itself. He brought them, instead of the prejudices of the Old World, something upon which they could themselves build in the New. In that sense Henri Focillon approached America with something of the faith and spirit of the French missionaries of the XVII Century. He sought to chart the streams and rivers of a new intellectual continent upon which his pupils could navigate with a freedom which he might have wished for those who followed him at home.

With this heritage and this example before us two groups of his students are determined that Henri Focillon's memory shall remain alive. One continues to work in Paris where it met regularly and clandestinely during the war. The other has been recently formed in the United States to mark the recognition of the debt we owe him and to his brief passage on our shores.

June 11, 1947.

FRANCIS HENRY TAYLOR.



# EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF HENRI FOCILLON

To the Editor:—You ask me to contribute to the number of the “Gazette des Beaux-Arts” which you dedicate to the memory of a great patriot in whom the critical faculty was ever paramount—to Henri Focillon. I am glad to do so if I may participate in quite informal fashion. Focillon and I were always that way during an unclouded friendship of some twenty years. We exchanged well over sixty letters. His spoken or written messages reflected always his heart as well as his eminent French intellect. When we met he talked with gusto and with a charm of diction that was rare. Our exchange of views took place sometimes on walks but more often late at night, either in front of an open fire at Shady Hill in Cambridge, or at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, or in his hospitable home in Paris. Those wide ranging talks, punctuated with his contagious enthusiasm, were landmarks. Focillon, it seemed to me, was most effective when least academic. Whether playful or serious, he revealed always the mind and the heart of the noble connoisseur-scholar of penetrating sagacity; of the prince of conversationalists; of the inspiring teacher whose speech was entirely adequate to express his crowding ideas; of the pure and sagacious patriot who was a citizen of the world.

Others will contribute, I know, learned articles which, given his immense intellectual enthusiasm and sympathy, his vast erudition and his catholic taste, he would have valued and approved. My contribution is more intimate. I venture to quote brief extracts culled from his many letters, all written with unflinching grace, with dignity, and with depth of conviction.

One evening in the winter of 1934 at Shady Hill, we were looking at the twenty-one drawings by Edgar Degas now in the Fogg Collection. We were in agreement that if we could choose but one example, it would have to be the drawing here illustrated, the sketch for the portrait of Mme. Hertel (*La Dame aux Chrysanthèmes*) (Fig. 1), a preparatory study for the painting in the Havemeyer Collection, a treasure of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We tried to analyze this preference and found that it was due to the fact that this wistful drawing, more than any in the lot, seemed to us to illustrate perfectly the superb capacity of



Degas as a draftsman; the artist's vital imagination and visualization of actuality; what Focillon delighted in calling a "*sensibilité*" quite absent in even the finest of Ingres' drawings and also, he added, "*la plus spirituelle finesse*"—a triumph of French taste. We also agreed that in this particular work Degas had depicted gesture with keen observation. In delighted unison we agreed that Degas always recorded gestures and movements which were the result of and reflected fixed habits, associated with particular professions and the exertions characteristic of his varied models. We were, however, baffled by the ingenuity of the artist who, with such economy of means, could render those qualities of French charm and repose which set their stamp of time, place, station and nationality upon the sitter.

Shortly after that memorable evening, I asked Focillon to do us the honor of delivering a lecture at the Fogg on "Drawings of the XIX Century." In reply he wrote on March 24, 1934, in part as follows:

*"... Nous sommes heureux d'accepter votre invitation pour le week end, et ce sera pour moi honneur et joie de parler sous vos auspices à Harvard. Je ferai la conférence que vous voudrez: j'ai pensé au Dessin de Degas (c. à. d. le style de Degas d'après ses dessins). . ."*

And then, after a brilliant lecture, in which he held his audience spellbound, he wrote again from New Haven, in part as follows:

*"Mon cher Ami. . . Nous rencontrons parfois dans la vie des gens qui aiment les mêmes choses que nous, mais il est extrêmement rare qu'ils les aiment de la même manière, avec la même passion profonde, et qui les mêlent également à la poésie de leur vie. . . Je me rapelle aussi la qualité de nos silences, nos airs complices, enfin, si je puis le dire, notre délectation fraternelle devant les mêmes chefs d'oeuvre. . . Déjà, dans nos conversations de Paris je sentais tout cela. Mais il me semble que ce weekend magique met entre nous des années de bonne amitié. . ."*

In another affectionate and whimsical letter he said:

*"Mais je n'ai point changé! J'aime toujours les beaux dessins, les bons esprits et la vraie amitié. Je suis très heureux d'avoir connu M. X—et comme homme et comme artiste. J'aurais voulu vous dire mieux combien j'apprécie son beau talent. Il est de la ligne de Saint Edgar Degas. Nous pourrions l'inscrire au nombre des membres de la S. S. B. (Seraphic Sensuality Brotherhood). . . Pour bien faire, il faudrait franchir les mers et aller nous enfermer dans l'arrière-*





FIG. 1. -- DEGAS. — Sketch for the Portrait of Mme. Hertel (*La Dame aux Chrysanthèmes*) in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. — Fogg Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (Paul J. Sachs Collection.)

*boutique d'un marchand de dessins de la rive gauche, devant un carton, . . . avec l'espoir de trouver quelque parchemin portant une esquisse giottesque à la terre verte! Mais ces miracles arrivent-ils deux fois"?*

Then later on in the same letter he makes remarks about a particular drawing by Caravaggio and asks for data in words, in which he turns from an affectionate and playful note to one entirely professional and serious:

*"Puis-je me permettre de joindre à ma lettre une petite note concernant un Caravage qui appartient à une collection américaine? Cette affaire ne présente aucun caractère d'urgence. . ."*

He attaches a closely written note covering the details that interest him:<sup>1</sup>

Each Christmas he sent original cryptic greetings in his own hand. And so in 1935 there came a message, in his miniscule script, that only Focillon could have composed with its unabashed warmth and wit. It read:

*"Que le dieu des amateurs veille sur les jours précieux de mon cher Paul Sachs. Qu'il donne à ce prince du goût, à sa chère femme, à sa chère famille, un heureux Noël, une heureuse année, pure et ferme comme un Degas, généreuse et colorée comme un Delacroix, mystérieuse et rayonnante comme un Rembrandt. Toujours unis dans la vie de l'esprit et dans la chaleur de l'amitié."*

As the clouds gathered in Europe, he, earlier than my other correspondents and sooner than most of us at home, saw the approach of the Monster; saw an impending and inevitable war. He was writing as always of matters that interested us both. And then suddenly he gave expression to his liberal political views and did so with passionate far-sighted intensity. In his Christmas letter of 1937 from Paris, writing about arrangements that he asked me to make for a visit to Cambridge of his old friend Puig i Cadafalch, he ends on this note:

*"... Et maintenant un mot (indiscret peut-être) au sujet de notre bon ami Puig i Cadafalch, qui a du quitter Barcelone pour se réfugier ici, au moment où les choses allaient mal en Catalogne. Il quitte Paris dans les premiers jours de janvier. Ne serait-il pas possible*

1. "Caravage aurait exécuté quatre versions des Pèlerins d'Emmaüs. Nous en connaissons trois,—l'un à Rome, Collection Patrizzi; l'autre à Londres, National Gallery (provenant de la Collection Borghese) un troisième, dans une collection particulière de Milan, dont j'ignore le propriétaire. Rouchès, conservateur adjoint au Louvre, en signale un quatrième qui se trouverait dans une collection américaine. C'est ce dernier qu'il serait intéressant pour nous de retrouver. Les Pèlerins de Milan et ceux des Etats-Unis peuvent provenir, l'un de Quiriaco Mathei, l'autre de la famille Colonna. Le tableau de Londres est le plus ancien des trois que nous connaissons. Il comprend le Christ, deux disciples et l'aubergiste. Le tableau Patrizzi comprend, en plus, une figure de vieille femme. Le tableau de Milan est analogue, pour les personnages, au tableau Patrizzi, mais ne comprend plus l'aubergiste."



*qu'il donnât à Harvard une ou deux conférences sur un des sujets qu'il connaît admirablement, par exemple les églises Asturiennes du IX<sup>e</sup>-X<sup>e</sup> siècles, sur lesquelles il a trouvé des choses fort importantes? Il serait heureux de revoir ses amis des Etats Unis. Et vous lui rendriez service. Il est triste de voir cet homme, véritablement grand et charmant, sur les routes de l'exil. Et ce qui est plus triste encore, c'est que ce grand libéral n'a rien à gagner au succès de l'un ou de l'autre parti en Espagne. J'imagine qu'un jour viendra où vous accueillerez dans votre sage patrie toute l'élite européenne, chassée par des passions folles. Et peut-être vous demanderai-je un jour une place de gardien de Musée, moi, vieux jacobin. . . ."*

But in spite of gathering clouds, in almost every letter there were expressions such as this:

*"Parlons un peu de ce que nous aimons—les beaux dessins, essence subtile du génie, expression pure de la spiritualité dans la vie."*

However, on April 14, 1938, commenting on his appointment to the Collège de France, he spoke in very different terms. His theme that day was "*La Force d'une Vie*" and commenting on his own life and activity which had always been a stranger to half-hearted effort, he said:

*"La mienne a été toute vouée à l'étude et à l'amitié. Elle ne changera pas, mais peut-être va-t-elle concentrer son effort et me permettre d'ajouter quelques travaux à ceux que j'ai pu donner, à travers une existence assez pleine. Je quitte avec regret la Sorbonne, qui m'a comblé de toutes les manières, mais je n'accepterais pas de quitter mes chers étudiants. Les meilleurs, je crois, me suivront dans mon nouveau monastère, et, de là, nous nous lancerons dans les 'South seas' d'enquêtes nouvelles. C'est le goût du neuf qui me pousse. Je l'ai toujours eu dans la peau et dans le coeur."*

And then under date of July 4, 1940, there came this touching letter from Buenos Aires (Figs. 2A and B) breathing a noble spirit of stoic determination:

*"Mes chers Amis, Combien nous a touchés votre télégramme, témoignage d'une amitié fidèle, à laquelle répond toute la nôtre. Loin de notre pays, loin des Etats-Unis, nous vous sentons tout près de nous. De tout notre coeur, merci. C'est au cours de notre voyage, à Rio, puis en Uruguay, puis en Argentine que nous avons été frappés par les nouvelles, comme d'autant de blessures. Il nous fallait en porter la douleur avec nous, la partager avec nos amis, innombrables et*

Buenos Aires  
ce 10 juillet 1940

Mes chers Amis,  
Combien vous a touché votre télégramme,  
le message d'une amitié fidèle, à laquelle  
répond toute la nôtre! Loins de votre pays, loins  
des Etats-Unis, nous vous sentons tout près de  
nous. De tout notre cœur, merci.

C'est au cours de votre voyage, à Rio, puis en  
Uruguay, puis en Argentine que nous avons été  
frappés par les nouvelles, comme d'autant de  
blessures. Il nous fallait en parler la douleur avec  
vous, la partager avec vos amis, inamovibles et  
chaleureux dans ces pays. Il fallait continuer à  
lutter pour la cause de la liberté. C'est à que j'ai  
fait, de toutes mes forces, en vieux soldat, et j'en  
suis sûr que le concours de une femme n'a  
pas été médiocre. Jamais nous n'avons désespéré  
de la patrie. Avec les jours, notre confiance, qui  
n'était pas un pur acte de foi, mais qui est d'ail-  
leurs, devient plus forte. La France a traversé  
au cours des siècles des périodes aussi dures. Tous  
jours, avec un magnifique élan, elle s'est relevée.  
Ce peuple est invincible. Le malheur lui sert.  
Il en fait bon usage. Et la guerre n'est pas terminée.  
J'ai le sentiment qu'elle commence.

Mais, pour l'amour de Dieu, voyez bien la situa-  
-tion comme elle est. Au cours de quelques semaines  
de voyage à travers les Etats-Unis, traversant  
le continent dans les deux sens, j'ai vu l'alle-  
-magne partout, sur la vieille et noble Allemagne,  
d'autre part, mais les nazis, mais les propagandistes,  
et toute une jeunesse accueillant avec bonne foi,  
avec innocence, les arguments de leur dialectique.

FIG. 2A. — Facsimile of a letter written by Henri Focillon after the fall of France in 1940.



j'ai vu les propres affreux de l'antisémitisme, cette honteuse maladie secrète qui menace de ronger le monde. Ici, en Amérique latine, l'antique force des influences françaises contrebalance en partie le péril : mais il est manifeste, et les coups de force sont possibles. Je n'exagère rien.

Nous partons demain pour le Brésil, ou nous resterons une quinzaine, avant de repasser New-Hork, où nous arriverons en août. Au temps s'écoulera avant notre retour en France, et je ferai heureux de le passer chez les hommes de l'Est, dans cette terre salubre d'où votre amitié nous a envoyés un message qui nous a fait du bien.

Mon cher Ami, ma chère Amie, nous nous unissons pour vous adresser, du fond du cœur, nos fidèles et confiantes pensées. Le règne des monstres prendra fin.

Pierre Focillon

Sans nouvelles de vos enfants, en forme occupée.

FIG. 2B. — Facsimile of page 2 of the Letter reproduced as Fig. 2A.

chaleureux dans ces pays. Il fallait continuer à lutter pour la cause de la liberté. C'est ce que j'ai fait, de toutes mes forces, en vieux soldat, et je vous assure que le concours de ma femme n'a pas été médiocre. Jamais nous n'avons désespéré de la patrie. Avec les jours, notre confiance, qui n'est pas un pur acte de foi, mais qui est raisonnée, devient plus forte. La France a traversé au cours des siècles des périodes aussi dures. Toujours, avec un magnifique élan, elle s'est relevée. Ce peuple est ineffaçable. Le malheur lui sert—il en fait bon usage. Et la guerre n'est pas terminée. J'ai le sentiment qu'elle commence. Mais, pour l'amour de Dieu, voyez bien la situation comme elle est. Au cours de longues semaines de voyage à travers les Etats-Unis, traversant le continent dans les deux sens, j'ai vu l'Allemagne partout, non la vieille et noble Allemagne d'autrefois, mais les Nazis, mais les propagandistes, et toute une jeunesse accueillant avec bonne foi, avec innocence, les arguments de leur dialectique. J'ai vu le progrès affreux de l'antisémitisme, cette honteuse maladie secrète qui menace de ronger le monde. Ici, en Amérique latine,

*l'antique force des influences françaises contrebalance en partie le péril:—mais il est manifeste, et les coups de force sont possibles. Je n'exagère rien. . . ."*

In the winter of 1940-1941, Focillon came to Dumbarton Oaks as the honored and inspiring first Senior Scholar in Residence. Dumbarton Oaks had but recently been transferred to Harvard University by his beloved and devoted friends, Mildred and Robert Bliss. In a Christmas letter in December, 1940, a few weeks before his arrival in Washington, he wrote:

*"Bien cher ami. . . . Quant à Dumbarton Oaks . . . entre nous, je me sens devenir buste, ou statue. Jamais l'amitié n'a tant fait pour l'amitié. . . . Je dois rencontrer à New York M. de Saint Quentin, qui a besoin de moi pour quelques éclaircissements sur le Brésil, et aussi mettre au bateau mon ami Jacques Truelle, à qui je dois rendre le même office pour la Roumanie. Ce qui est remarquable dans tout ceci, c'est qu'un damné rebelle, comme moi, aime de tout son coeur des agents de ses adversaires, et travaille avec eux à sauver la patrie."*

Our correspondence covering a span of twenty years ended January 8, 1943, with a long letter from his sick bed. It was filled, as always, with helpful comments about work at Dumbarton Oaks, so near and dear to his heart. Even in that last letter the undaunted patriot, mortally ill, said in a passionate outburst:

*". . . Il n'y a en France que deux factions, les collaborateurs et les Free French. Parmi les derniers régne la plus étroite amitié. Catholiques, Juifs, Protestants, libres-penseurs, nous sommes avant tout des patriotes. . . . Je vous serre affectueusement la main."*

In spite of beautiful tributes at Memorial Meetings for Henri Focillon held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, at Dumbarton Oaks and elsewhere, in 1943, I have ventured in 1945, in the year of Victory, which in the darkest days he confidently expected but did not live to see, to send you these intimate, informal notes and extracts because this unique and learned patriot had a great faculty for friendship, being the "total man" that he was. He would, I am sure, have approved that in a volume such as this, an old friend should see fit to submit a little of the evidence that the sparkle of his mind and the power of his intellect were never at the expense of his affections.

November, 1945.

PAUL J. SACHS.





FIG. 1. — Vues des Jardins de Dumbarton Oaks.

# HENRI FOCILLON

## A

# DUMBARTON OAKS

**L** E RAYONNEMENT du Maître fut d'ordre très particulier. Une chaleur humaine émanait de tout son être qui semblait l'intelligence faite homme. La personnalité même d'Henri Focillon en faisait le symbole vivant de l'Humanisme français.

A d'autres le privilège de parler du Savant, du Patriote et du Philosophe. Pour nous le doux plaisir d'évoquer l'image — disons plus justement les images —



FIG. 2. — Dumbarton Oaks, Entrée Principale.

du Maître à Dumbarton Oaks. C'est là, dans la vie quotidienne, que nous avons connu l'influence bienfaisante de cet homme, enclin par son universalité et sa bonté, à s'attacher à tout être qui entraînait dans son orbite.

A l'heure où Dumbarton Oaks allait faire ses premiers pas dans son nouveau rôle académique, le Professeur et Madame Focillon vinrent s'y installer. Aussitôt la vieille demeure s'anima sous la magie de sa parole. Jusque dans ses silences, il domina par l'envergure de sa culture et par le charme de sa courtoisie. Il s'associa à toute activité de cette vie large et nourissante. Il n'y fut étranger à rien. Les reliures "romantiques" du XIX, le bébé de M. Bisbels, qu'il appelait "le bibelot," les domestiques, qui se plaisaient à le servir; tous, jusqu'aux hôtes à quatre pattes du parc, allaient ressentir la caresse d'un ami ou la sympathie d'une connaissance.

Goûtant le charme des jardins, en harmonie avec Mme Focillon, sa compagne inséparable, il se promenait sous les chênes séculaires et cherchait à reconnaître les oiseaux dont il écoutait les chœurs matinaux. Les mouvements capricieux des



écureuils le ravissaient — “plumes d'autruche au vent,” les appelait-il; et il inventait d'autres images aussi vivantes pour les jeunes lapins bondissant sur le gazon. La fraîcheur d'observation de l'enfance et le libre engouement d'un coeur pur exercèrent leur grâce comme une contagion heureuse. Tout vibra: l'imagination régna.

Aux repas, et à l'heure du thé; il dirigeait de sa baguette délicate l'orchestre humain de savants et d'agrégés, de vieux et de jeunes, où chacun se faisait fort d'inventer un thème, mais où l'on ne demandait pas mieux que de s'élever à la musique d'ensemble.

Très assidu dans son travail, Focillon ne souffrait guère les interruptions, mais deux fois par jour il cédait aux sollicitations de sa pipe. Matin et soir, on le vit arpenter, de long en large, le jardinnet du Musée, les mains derrière le dos, le cerveau en feu. Sa discipline exigeait



FIG. 4. — Jardins de Dumbarton Oaks avec Vue de l'Orangerie.



FIG. 3. — Dumbarton Oaks, Façade du Côté Nord.

l'épreuve des idées avant la rédaction; ce qui lui valait l'admirable enchaînement de ses périodes équilibrées et polies. Il appréciait le mot juste et l'évoquait d'instinct au service d'une prose à la fois sensible et forte. De sa belle calligraphie régulière, il composait lentement ces pages harmonieuses et soignées qui font la noblesse de ses manuscrits. Et sa précision en toute chose était telle qu'il admettait rarement une



FIG. 5. — Dumbarton Oaks, Salle de Conférence, ancienne Salle de Musique.

révision. “Son travail à la plume,” disait Valéry “était d’un graveur. Il avait le sens des tailles et des hâchures comme il avait celui des termes et des images.”

L’art était bien pour Focillon “l’espace vital.” On sentait, à le voir tenir un objet, qu’il l’aimait de sa main autant que de son esprit. — “Il faut toucher un objet des yeux,” disait-il, “pour sentir la qualité de son épiderme.” La “pensée esthétique” ne lui suffisait pas.

Il nous souvient de sa première visite à Dumbarton Oaks. Descendant prudemment les marches, sa tête puissante inclinée de côté et son regard vif embrassant tout, jusqu’aux détails, malgré ses lunettes épaisses et ses paupières apparemment baissées: “Ah! Madame,” disait-il, “j’ai de si mauvais yeux — je ne vois rien.” Mais aussitôt d’ajouter: “Oh! la belle tapisserie copte — les Néréides, n’est-ce pas? J’aurai beaucoup de plaisir à l’étudier de plus près.” Or, il eût été difficile pour quiconque de la bien voir, tant elle (Fig. 6) était placée haut!

Assis à la table où nous lui étalions les petits objets précieux en ivoire, en or



ou en pierre taillée, le Maître incomparable nous mena le long des belles routes de la pensée, avec leurs tournants imprévus et leurs sentiers en fuite vers la montagne.

Le Génie de l'enseignement ayant présidé à sa naissance, il dissémina d'un toucher léger l'immense acquis de sa science profonde. Ses élèves ne furent jamais de simples disciples du Maître car le talent de cet éducateur d'élite tendait à éveiller en eux le désir de connaître par eux-mêmes. "Les ignorants sont des pauvres mal-nourris," disait-il, "L'érudition nous alimente;" et il attisait la flamme de la curiosité intellectuelle, la regardant s'élancer vers de nouveaux horizons. Il ne connut qu'une frontière: la Vérité; n'eut d'intolérance que pour un préjugé: le Faux. Il savait critiquer avec délicatesse mais il possédait au plus haut degré le sens du ridicule, arme redoutable qu'il n'hésitait pas à manier contre quiconque manquait de sincérité. Gare à celui qui l'y poussait, car d'une joute de réparties il sortait toujours vainqueur!

Pendant sa première année académique, Dumbarton Oaks eut le privilège d'être guidé par "ce Théoricien qui savait et pouvait reprendre en maître tous les problèmes éternels de l'esthétique."

Hélas! ce beau chapitre allait se clore. Une ombre bientôt se dessina. Les journées de travail et les longues causeries du soir commencèrent à



FIG. 7. — Art Byzantin, X Siècle. — Buste de Jésus Christ, Camée, Saphir. — Collection de Dumbarton Oaks.



FIG. 6. — Art Copte, IV-V Siècles. — Les Néréides, tapisserie. — Collection de Dumbarton Oaks.



FIG. 8. — Art Byzantin (Venise) XI Siècle. — Figure de la Vierge debout, bas-relief, marbre. — Collection de Dumbarton Oaks.

fatiguer ce moraliste militant. Le sombre drâme de son pays l'avait déjà vouté d'angoisse. Mais, écartant le mal cardiaque qui le minait, il se redressait en disant simplement: "Ce qui penche et ce qui se plie est attiré vers la mort. La France a besoin de chacun de nous."

Dumbarton Oaks n'oublie pas la lutte ardue qu'il mena contre la mort, le coeur meurtri par ce mal qui le tint aux abois pendant deux longues années de supplice. Une nature moins forte se fût soumise bien plus tôt. Cependant, la bataille engagée fut trop inégale, et même une volonté aussi tenace dut céder enfin à cette torture. Le Maître s'efforçait de pénétrer les ténèbres qui avaient enveloppé la France et il savait qu'il ne la reverrait plus, mais il ne perdit jamais la certitude raisonnée de sa renaissance et de sa continuité.

Quand il dut quitter Dumbarton Oaks, tous le pleurèrent: Faculté, personnel et jardiniers. On eût dit que les oiseaux chantaient en mineur et que les "plumes d'autruche" elles-mêmes pendaient mollement des arbres.

A tous — hommes et bêtes — il avait su donner quelque chose qui les rehaussât. On se demandait ce que serait la route à parcourir sans l'encouragement de sa générosité. De la stérilité des "pauvres mal-nourris," il avait su extraire une graine insoupçonnée mais toujours apte à se développer sous le rayonnement de son enseignement. Et maintenant? "Un beau silence au dedans de nous-mêmes et tout nous parle," avait-il dit. A nous, dès lors, d'écouter. . .

Aux souvenirs intimes de cet Ami





FIG. 9. — Art Byzantin, 950-1000. La Vierge à l'Enfant et deux Saints. — Collection de Dumbarton Oaks

qui fut notre Maître, nous emprunterons certaines maximes qui suffiraient déjà à sauvegarder en nous quelque chose de sa vivante philosophe :

Mépriser le Faux  
Haïr la Cruauté et l'Injustice  
Vouloir l'Intégrité et la Loyauté absolues  
Aimer le Beau et savoir le reconnaître  
Poursuivre l'Erudition "qui n'a pas de bornes"  
Savoir pénétrer jusqu'au coeur des hommes  
et jusqu'au noyau des idées.

Voilà nous semble-t-il, le legs moral et intellectuel que nous tenons du Maître; le fil d'or dans le tissu de notre héritage à Dumbarton Oaks — cet héritage de large humanité dont notre grand ami fut lui-même le bénéficiaire et le transmetteur. En lui, nous avons connu la quintessence de cette culture méditerranéenne qui déborda de ses rives pour abreuver jusqu'à nous la discipline humanistique française.

Héritier de la pensée du Maître, Dumbarton Oaks a foi dans son propre avenir. Force nous soit de rendre cette institution digne de l'enseignement de :

Henri Focillon, du Collège de France, et du Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection dont les aspirations, telles qu'elles sont exprimées sur sa pierre fondatrice (Fig. 10), rejoignent la haute pensée du Maître.

GEORGETOWN, 1947.

MILDRED BLISS.

QUOD SEVERIS METES  
THE  
DUMBARTON OAKS  
RESEARCH LIBRARY AND COLLECTION  
HAS BEEN ASSEMBLED AND CONVEYED TO  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
BY MILDRED AND ROBERT WOODS BLISS  
THAT THE CONTINUITY OF SCHOLARSHIP IN THE  
BYZANTINE AND MEDIAEVAL HUMANITIES  
MAY REMAIN UNBROKEN  
TO CLARIFY AN EVER CHANGING PRESENT  
AND TO INFORM THE FUTURE  
WITH WISDOM  
MCMXL

FIG. 10. — Inscription sur la Pierre Fondatrice de Dumbarton Oaks.





## HENRI FOCILLON AND DUMBARTON OAKS

### *In Memoriam*

During the months before Dumbarton Oaks was conveyed to Harvard University in November 1940 by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Woods Bliss, the first thought of those who were intimately connected with the future of Dumbarton Oaks was naturally the choice of the leader who would conduct the scholarly work in this new research institution. If Dumbarton Oaks was to become not only a research institution for the study of Early Christian and Byzantine art, but also a center for the Humanities, it was essential to find a man with rare intellectual and spiritual qualities, a scholar knowledgeable in the field to which Dumbarton Oaks is dedicated, a personality who would stimulate thinking in others and whose mere presence at Dumbarton Oaks would give to it those many intangible attributes of sympathy and understanding which are an essential part of any humanitarian. A person who was not only a distinguished scholar but who had a broad basic conception of all cultures and civilizations. It was a most auspicious beginning for Dumbarton Oaks that Henri Focillon agreed to be its first Research Scholar in Residence.

Focillon entered into every phase and aspect of the life of Dumbarton Oaks. His interest was all-encompassing—be it the gardens, the development of the Library, the plans for lectures and symposia, publications, and of course the Collection, to which he brought both his scholarly knowledge and his keen esthetic judgment. He took a deep and personal interest in all of his colleagues and associates and established with them friendships which are deeply cherished.

It was a great tragedy for Dumbarton Oaks that this propitious beginning in its new life was not permitted to develop into the fullness and richness which was justly anticipated. It was not long after Professor Focillon's arrival in Washington that he was taken ill, which meant that his work and his activities were soon curtailed. However, the spark of inspiration which he lighted in the being of Dumbarton Oaks, and in the hearts and minds of his friends, has happily been far from extinguished.

As a tangible indication of the esteem in which the memory of Henri Focillon is held at Dumbarton Oaks, the scholar in charge of research is known as the Henri Focillon Professor.

April, 1947.

JOHN S. THACHER.



# HENRI FOCILLON

## AT DUMBARTON OAKS

### A FEW MEMORIES

**H**AD anyone told me in those early days of 1941 when Henri Focillon was first in residence at Dumbarton Oaks, quickening the minds and hearts of all who came within the ambience of his spirit, that to me would be given the inestimable privilege of sharing with him winged moments of merry comradeship and quiet ones of confidences exchanged: or, that in the early days of 1947 I would be asked to distil the essence of those moments so that something of their fragrance might still persist, "*I should have been too glad, I see, too lifted for the scant degree of life's penurious round.*" (EMILY DICKINSON, *Too Much.*)

The comradeship began during his illness in late February and March. After the first alarming days—they seemed weeks—he was allowed one brief visit a day. My turn would come around, every now and then, at eleven o'clock in the morning. He was in bed, upstairs, just above the library. His face white, except for the criss-crossing of bright red capillary veins on his cheeks. His hands, semi-transparent, issuing from the long-sleeved fullness of his snow-white linen night shirt,



lay, passive, one above the other, on the coverlet. There was a window to the East behind him and two facing South on his left. He could not lift — indeed, could hardly turn, his massive head; that round, Boutet de Monvel head. Lying thus, prone, he could see, at most, the tops of the tallest trees and a patch of sky. Yet he would tell me of the rabbits and squirrels: "*Les petits lapins qui font la culbute sur le gazon!*" He would describe the cardinal: "*Ce gros oiseau rouge qui m'envoie son salut du matin.*" And his face would break up into twinkles when I would ask him what he had already seen that morning through his "*périscopes particulier.*" Oh! that twinkle . . . that invitation to gaiety! One of his most endearing characteristics. And yet, quick — ever-ready as it was with its invitation — underneath (the *doublure*) lay a sadness. An accepted sadness, such as often perhaps, underlies a tender spiritual gaiety.

It was during one of these eleven o'clock visits that the idea of recording "*les mots de M. Focillon*" came to me. Possibly, the small discreet note book and pencil alerted him. The exquisite subtlety of his demeanor gave no indication. He assumed a masque of pleased but impenetrable innocence. Yet was there not a perfect timing? An almost imperceptible pause? A darting conspiratory glance? Was he not slyly apprising me of his awareness when he said: "*Merci de vos compliments. Si vous trouvez que je parle bien, écoutez mes silences. Ils sont encore plus beaux.*" And was he not dispelling any such suspicion from my mind when he volunteered: "*Je suis innocent dans les jeux. Je joue en fantaisiste, comme un romantique.*"

Toward spring, when he was better and able to take up his work again, he would often spend part of a morning with me in the rare book room. There we set up card tables and regrouped the books. Not by the alphabet, but rather by the amenities — "*il ne faut pas qu'ils se battent la nuit*" — for he knew all about them all, as one might know all about the people in the village in which one was born. He had only to reach up and take a book from the shelves; hold it in his hands, without opening it, without — it almost seemed — reading the title, and there would follow an easy flow of anecdote, appreciation and appraisal. Mme Focillon would come in with some mid-morning nourishment; often she would beg him to stop. Often, he did not obey, and looking at her whimsically would say: "*Pauvre Marguerite, je suis un tyran domestique!*" Before leaving for the summer, he promised: "*Nous arrangerons une jolie petite exposition de livres Romantiques, vous et moi; avec une conférence.*" Hélas, that was not to be . . .

Perhaps the happiest memories that I have hover around the writing of a "*Fabliau de Noël*" before Christmas of the following winter. We called it "*Les Voix de Dumbarton Oaks*," and did, really, think of ourselves as the *Jongleurs du Moyen Age* about to enter through the wide gates, sing our songs and recite our verses pour "*les Blisses.*" He gave to each of us a charming character and name:

*Le Voyageur; Le Porphyrogenète; L'Air qu'on Respire; L'Oiseau des Steppes; La Fée des Bois; La Déesse des Livres; Celle qui Trouve; La Paix Profonde.*  
 The note which he sent me, with the finished manuscript, just before leaving for Cuba (to give of himself once more for the good of mankind) tells more of the sweet whimsy of his spirit and the boundless generosity of his soul than any words of mine ever could:

"Dumbarton Oaks,  
 le 20 Novembre 1941.

*Chère bonne Amie,*

*Vous avez transformé mes grossiers propos gaulois en un chant d'Ariel. Comment ai-je pu me permettre de retoucher (à peine) ce que vous faites si bien dire au Prologue? J'ai posé une note de gentillesse sur la chevelure de Jack et me suis dérobé aux honneurs de la maîtrise et de l'érudition.*

*Car je ne veux d'autre titre que celui de votre ami, qui vous baise respectueusement les mains.*

*A bientôt,*

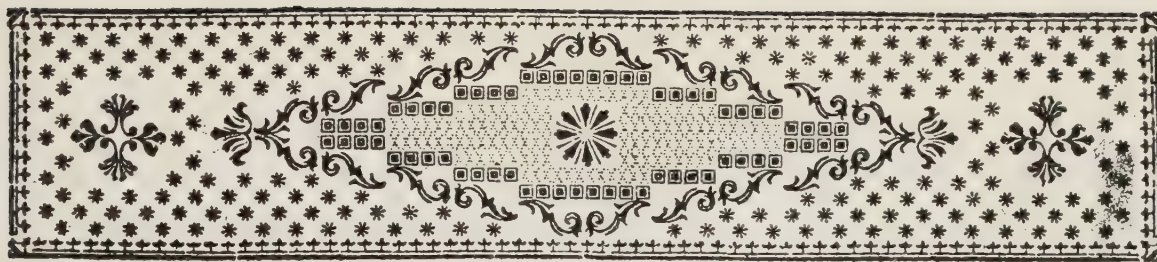
*Votre Cubain provisoire  
 Henri Focillon."*

March, 1947.

ETHEL BURNET CLARK.







# HENRI FOCILLON AT THE PHILLIPS GALLERY

## *IN MEMORIAM*

**I**F IT IS TRUE, as I believe, that there never was, and that there might never again be a greater historian of art than Henri Focillon, then it is due at least in part to the truth, so well known to those who were privileged to share his vivid impressions and his illuminating conceptions, that he was himself a great creative artist. He had a genius for words and for imaginative intuitions, and with these artistries he combined the logic and the constructive criticism so characteristic of the French intellect at its best. Fortunate were his pupils who could stake a claim to his mine of global, world-uniting erudition and partake of his liberal, noble mind and heart. He could lecture gloriously. He could hold his classes and his audiences enthralled and profoundly inspired with the miracles of art and the cycles of civilization.

That thrilling voice is now still. We shall not see again the massive head, the heavy shoulders and stooped back, the indomitable eyes behind the thick lenses

which, through the inner vision of his matchless mind, could penetrate far beyond the boundaries of what he once called his "habitual obscurity." With those eyes of the imagination Focillon could, from his first peering glimpse at any part, comprehend the style of a whole painting or building. Thus he thought as an artist thinks, in terms of the functioning of a form; of the development of a detail into a compact or complex design; of the metamorphosis of something seen in nature or a museum into something new, with a formal life of its own, capable in its turn of generating new forms to exist in "space as an environment" or in "space as a limit."

Focillon the magnetic, the witty and the inspired lecturer has passed into legend. Yet his methods and ideals of scholarship and his books with their abundant beauties will continue to bridge the chasm which so often separates the scholar from the artist. He knew the artist's separate world, whether Occidental or Oriental, whether Ancient or Modern. And he knew that history repeats itself in recurring phases of individual or collective expression. His greatest work *The Life of Forms in Art* takes its place on the shelf of indispensable books. It is so full of dynamic substance that one can draw from any page the motive power for creative thinking, according to one's special aim or need. For me, the most valuable condensations of clear guidance to sound and tolerant understanding of the many-minded esthetic purposes are to be found in those pages in which he made two satisfying reclassifications.

To Focillon we are indebted for the clearest statement on the evolutionary stages in the life of forms: the experimental or archaic period of ascent, the classic moment of balance on a summit, the delectable slopes of the refinements, and the baroque age of the proliferating patterns. And it remained for Focillon to list also the most significant families of the artists; the builders, the sensibilities, the mannerists, the virtuosi, and the visionaries. The two categories supplement each other. The first reminds us that the civilizations have successions of prevailing trends in art, their forms evolving to corresponding stages in different parts of the world at different periods of time. To cite one example, Greek archaism of the early V Century B. C. is like Gothic archaism of the early XIII Century A. D. Thus, as Focillon points out, "one apprehends the constancy and identity of the human spirit everywhere." The second listing — the most universal affinities of artists — warns us that there are variations from the norm in every period; that differing and dissenting individuals conform to the laws of their own nature, and for spiritual comradeship can seek their own kind across the ages.

In our intimate gallery of paintings in Washington, Focillon recognized that I was bringing together kindred spirits and contrasting them with other kinships which appealed for different qualities. He approved the mobility of the collection, its creative, plastic change, its sense of being lived with and worked with and loved.





FIG. 1. — DAUMIER. — The Uprising (*L'Emeute*). — Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C.

*"C'est un visionnaire peint par un visionnaire . . . Il profère un cri ou un chant, répété par la foule . . . Ses yeux sont ouverts et ne voient pas. L'Emeutier est possédé par un songe . . . Une attraction magnétique entraîne ses comparses . . . Quel roman d'une vie dans ce que l'on voit et ce que l'on ne voit pas. . . . Toutes les passions généreuses d'un temps—et l'insurgé éternel, nomade de l'esprit hanté par le futur, combattant anonyme de batailles sans nom. . . .*

*La touche a le caractère emporté de l'esquisse. On ne peint pas un émeutier comme le portrait d'un souverain. . . . Le dessous graphique, parfois visible, comme l'armature à la plume d'une aquarelle largement lavée, maintient partout la forme. . . . Cette langue de peintre, laconique et terrible, n'est pas celle des orateurs de la Révolution, toute linéaire. Ses abréviations chaleureuses sont plus humaines. Elles sont emplies de la familiarité des foules. Ainsi se présente à nous cette étonnante vision de Daumier, peintre de l'Emeute."*

From the text of a lecture, *Visionnaires—Goya to Daumier*, by HENRI FOCILLON delivered at the Phillips Memorial Gallery in Washington, April 18, 1940.

We can never forget the great man's pleasure in our pictures, his generosity of encouragement and guidance. My wife and I admired him so much and became so fond of him that I cannot write of him with impersonal detachment. Best known perhaps as a supremely great authority on Byzantine, Romanesque and Gothic architecture and sculpture, Focillon was for me the best of all critics of XIX Century painting and drawing, and especially of Daumier; one who truly loved the artist's point of view and the many varied felicities of his touch; one who could interpret all the great modern artists with spontaneous inspiration.

The United States borrowed Focillon again and again. It was in our midst, during the dark days of the German occupation of his beloved France, that he spent for the cause of freedom all that remained to him of his ardor, his eloquence and his very life. America can be proud that our scholars appreciated him; that his American pupils will translate him into English and carry on in his techniques of teaching; that he will always be remembered as one of the best loved and most reverently followed of our college professors. Words were his medium and the clarity and grandeur of the French language his natural element. Yet he was one of us — a universal artist. His kind and soaring spirit was at home wherever men are free or aspire to be free.

April 28, 1947.

DUNCAN PHILLIPS.







# HENRI FOCILLON

## PROFESSEUR D'ARCHEOLOGIE ET DU MOYEN AGE

**L**ES étudiants qui, vers 1925, préparaient à la Sorbonne un certificat d'archéologie du Moyen Age se sont-ils rendu compte immédiatement de ce qu'il y avait de prodigieux pour eux à avoir comme professeur un homme qui disait en plaisantant : "Je ne suis pas un spécialiste de l'Archéologie du Moyen Age, j'ai simplement eu la chance d'enseigner dans des villes à cathédrales"? — boutade qui dissimulait volontairement une érudition nourrie d'une ancienne curiosité de l'art roman et gothique, mais qui soulignait aussi l'indépendance d'esprit avec laquelle Henri Focillon arrivait à l'étude systématique des monuments du Moyen Age ; il y parvenait par les détours de l'art de Piranèse, des estampes d'Hokusai, et des recherches de ceux qu'il avait appelés "les visionnaires," le regard rempli de peinture moderne, l'esprit meublé des oeuvres le plus neuves de la littérature contemporaine.

Ce qu'ils comprirent en tout cas, ce fut le ton inusité qu'employait vis-à-vis d'eux ce professeur qui les traitait impérieusement en collaborateurs — et non en collaborateurs futurs — mais qui réclamait une participation immédiate à ses travaux, leur aide dans ses recherches, leur opinion sur ses théories. Ceux auxquels il a été donné d'assister à son premier cours en Sorbonne n'oublieront jamais le choc que leur donna cette parole directe, ce ton de conversation auquel ils se laissèrent

immédiatement entraîner, et la discussion animée, véhémence qui s'ensuivit. Ils subirent dès le premier jour l'attrait de ce mot que Focillon prononçait déjà vis-à-vis d'eux, de ce mot qui a été un des pivots de sa pensée et de son activité : il parlait volontiers, pour définir une certaine attitude de l'artiste, de "l'amitié" de l'homme, de "l'amitié" du monde ; c'est de l'amitié aussi qu'il sut faire la base de ce groupe d'études qu'il suscita autour de lui. Tout de suite il l'organisa, lui donna des buts de recherches, et l'anima inlassablement de ses conseils, et de sa présence. Il avait trouvé autour de lui des étudiants d'origine, de formation le plus diverses. Il tira parti de cette diversité même, et des contacts avec toutes les parties de l'Europe qu'elle représentait, pour élargir le champ des recherches faites en commun. Il provoqua les voyages que le groupe des étudiants d'histoire de l'art entreprit bientôt en France et presque dans toute l'Europe, il en suivait de près les programmes, et souvent il les accompagnait, les animant de sa parole. Étonnantes expéditions auxquelles, quand il y participait, il donnait une animation intellectuelle presque épuisante pour ses auditeurs. Il passait, avec le même intérêt, d'un monument à un musée, et pendant les trajets, il abordait les sujets le plus divers. Il y eut entre autres un certain voyage à Saint Benoît sur Loire, où pendant une panne d'autocar, assis sur le talus de la route, ses élèves à ses pieds, il évoqua, en une improvisation étincelante, inspiré par la proximité de la Loire, toute une série de courtes nouvelles à demi inconnues de Balzac. Puis l'autocar repartit . . . et il ne fut plus question que d'art roman.

En effet, pendant les premières années de son enseignement, la sculpture romane l'absorba presque complètement ; elle fut le centre de ses études et de discussions sans fin. Si bien qu'il n'est aucun de ses étudiants qui puisse, sans revoir l'image familière du maître au milieu des ses élèves, lire cette phrase de l'introduction de son *Art des Sculpteurs Romains* : "Souvent sur la place d'un étroit village, à l'ombre d'un porche au devant d'une façade colorée par le temps, ces beaux caprices d'ornement, des reliefs où la figure de l'homme est à la fois bête et plante, entrelacs et méandres, m'ont paru indéchiffrables et irréductibles à la raison." Problèmes essentiels qui le préoccupaient, et qui donnent tout de suite le ton avec lequel il a abordé l'art médiéval et l'ordre des recherches qu'il a suscitées chez ceux qui l'entouraient.

Pour lui, l'étude de l'art roman n'était pas une sèche énumération de faits. Certes, les études médiévales françaises, inaugurées par ce "visionnaire" de génie qu'était Viollet-le-Duc n'ont jamais été menacées de tourner à l'analyse aride, à la dissection insensible. Et il suffit de prononcer les noms de Courajod, d'André Michel, d'Emile Mâle, pour réaliser de quelle riche sympathie humaine elles ont été imprégnées. Mais Henri Focillon les a envisagées à deux points de vue nouveaux qui en dégagent la signification profonde et qui ont eu une influence durable sur tous ceux qui ont suivi son enseignement.

Tout d'abord, un art est pour lui le signe visible de l'esprit, une manifestation



humaine qui correspond aux autres manifestations intellectuelles d'un même groupe d'hommes—littérature, philosophie, curiosités scientifiques—et qui nous révèle un peu de leur âme. "Chacun des chapitres de notre civilisation a son socle géographique et son paysage. Ils s'éveillent et s'éclairent successivement comme les divers aspects d'un grand site parcouru par la lumière" . . . "L'homme de cette période, défini par un système social et par une activité intellectuelle resterait à moitié dans l'ombre s'il n'était encore présent et debout parmi nous dans les pierres des monuments. Ce ne sont pas des documents complémentaires de son histoire: il y est tout entier. L'architecte, l'imagier et le peintre sont unis au philosophe et au poète, et tous concourent à élever une sorte de cité de l'esprit, dont les fondations reposent sur les assises de la vie historique."

C'est sans doute la tendance des hommes du XI<sup>e</sup> Siècle à ne pas se contenter du monde réel qui l'a attiré vers eux. "Chaque époque, nous dit-il, requiert les familles d'esprit qui lui sont nécessaires et qui lui donnent dans l'histoire sa couleur propre. C'est à ce trait que se marque la véritable unité d'un siècle. L'âge roman est dominé par les visionnaires. Ils lui communiquent leur instinct de surhumanité, leur appétit des choses cachées et des vérités surnaturelles" . . . "L'art du XI<sup>e</sup> et du XII<sup>e</sup> Siècle n'est pas dominé par le despotisme de l'objet, par le souci de la copie fidèle et de la représentation intégrale, mais par la joie de sa propre courbe, par l'obéissance à ses propres lois." Il "répond sans doute à des exigences intellectuelles définies, à ce besoin d'un ordre, à cette passion des combinaisons fortes dont l'art contemporain nous montre aussi l'inquiétude." Et il voit dans cette attitude le pendant de celle des dialecticiens telle que l'a définie Gilson lorsqu'il dit que "pour un penseur de ce temps, connaître et expliquer une chose consiste toujours à montrer qu'elle n'est pas ce qu'elle paraît être, qu'elle est le symbole et le signe d'une réalité plus profonde, qu'elle annonce ou qu'elle signifie autre chose."

L'autre point de vue auquel il se place, plus neuf encore peut-être, est celui qu'il indique au seuil de son livre sur les sculpteurs romans: "Cet ouvrage . . . étudie la sculpture romane comme mesure de l'espace."

Elevé auprès d'un artiste dont il aimait à manier les outils, Focillon avait le sentiment aigu des problèmes d'exécution propres à chaque art. A bien des reprises, il a souligné l'importance de la technique qui *crée*. Ici, ce sont les problèmes propres à la sculpture architecturale qui vont le préoccuper, les rapports du bâtiment et de la pierre ouvrée qui le décore, et les modifications que ces rapports ont imposé à la forme.

Et les deux points de vue se rejoignent, puisque ces hommes qui n'ont pas le souci de l'imitation littérale de la nature seront prêts à faire subir aux formes qu'ils empruntent au monde visible, les plus étonnantes métamorphoses.

Mais avant de s'attaquer à l'étude des méthodes des sculpteurs romans, il passe en revue les expériences analogues et préliminaires, en se gardant bien d'indiquer

trop brutalement des influences, mais en soulignant des inquiétudes pareilles, un travail d'esprit du même ordre. Il examine dans l'art sassanide par des "exemples de la réduction de la figure humaine à un schéma géométrique" un "essai pour l'adapter heureusement à une forme architecturale donnée." Etudiant le premier art islamique, il constate que la "soumission d'une forme donnée" (ici ornements géométriques, caractères d'écriture) "à une loi plus générale s'est exercée à la fois dans l'art arabe et dans l'art occidental." Puis il s'attarde à l'art irlandais: "une des plus étonnantes rêveries humaines, un des plus mystérieux caprices de l'esprit," et constate que "les grands recueils calligraphiés et illustrés au VII et VIII Siècles par les moines irlandais, constituent une expérience décisive dans l'histoire de l'art médiéval et dans la formation de l'art roman." Mais toutes ces expériences "capitales pour l'interprétation de l'art roman ne sont pas l'art roman." "L'art sassanide forge des grottes et sculpte des pans de montagne, il bâtit des palais audacieusement voûtés . . . mais il répand sur leur façade la plastique monumentale des grandes cités de l'Asie." "L'art arabe ne s'est posé qu'un petit nombre de problèmes constructifs et il n'a jamais associé les fonctions et les effets. La miniature irlandaise n'est qu'un art graphique, et les croix qui s'en inspirent sont des mégalithes, non des constructions. Quant à l'art carolingien, il confie l'essentiel du décor des monuments aux stuccateurs et aux mosaïstes." "La sculpture romane travaille dans la pierre, elle s'accorde avec les fonctions de l'architecture. Pour restaurer la forme, elle a derrière elle de vastes expériences dont elle fait son profit, elle ose traiter la figure humaine, non comme une donnée fixe, non comme un thème à variations, mais comme une matière extensible et compressible. Et toutefois elle élabore un humanisme qui lui est propre qui est étranger au génie antique comme aux cultures orientales, et par là, cet art est peut-être la première définition de l'Occident."

L'art dont il donne une si ample définition, il l'étudie dans ses différentes expériences, et cherche comment il résout le problème de l'adaptation de la forme sculptée au chapiteau, au tympan, allongeant ou raccourcissant les formes, créant des monstres. Il cherche les principes et les procédés de composition qui régissent ces combinaisons d'êtres fantastiques et le problème que pose leur tendance perpétuelle au mouvement. Et il en trouve le secret dans l'art de "géométrie" dont parle Villard de Honnecourt dans la note-préface de son *Album*, et dont, en plein XIII Siècle, il donne des exemples si frappants — survivances sans doute des méthodes romanes — art de géométrie qui semble correspondre aux préoccupations du temps, et qui a un parallèle dans les théories géométriques de Robert de Grosse-tête, évêque de Lincoln.

C'est autour de ces recherches d'une si frappante nouveauté que se sont organisés des travaux d'élèves dont les uns ont aidé à préciser certaines parties de son enseignement, et dont d'autres provoqués par lui, se sont poursuivis et développés dans d'autres directions. Les *Travaux* publiés en 1928 par les Etudiants du



Groupe d'Histoire de l'Art montrent, dans leur diversité, l'amorce de quelques unes de ces recherches : une étude sur Saint Philibert de Tournus y voisine avec un article sur l'orfèvrerie carolingienne. Mais parmi les études plus approfondies qui se sont développées parallèlement à celles du maître et en sont le complément, il faut citer avant tout le travail de Jurgis Baltrusaitis sur la *Stylistique Romane*, avec son étude systématique et minutieuse des diverses méthodes par lesquelles les sculpteurs romans adaptent la figure humaine et animale à des schémas réguliers, palmettes, figures géométriques, etc. . . . Son étude sur *L'Art Médiéval en Géorgie et en Arménie*, préparée par un voyage et une admirable documentation photographique, précise l'une des expériences préliminaires. Et l'inquiétude qu'avait Focillon de l'art irlandais a incité deux de ses élèves à aborder l'analyse d'un monde étrange d'entrelacs, de spirales et de monstres cohérents. Autour de lui se sont multipliées les études sur les monuments romans : celle de G. Fontaine sur l'Abbaye de Pointigny, celle de Fikry sur l'Art roman du Puy et les influences islamiques, celle de Gaillard, de Jullian, de Perrault-Desaix sur Neuvy Saint Sépulcre, celle de S. Brodtbeck sur les voûtes romanes de l'église de Romain Ôtier, celle de Seymour sur la Cathédrale de Noyon . . . et tant d'autres encore, dont certaines, comme celle de Ladislav Gal sur l'Architecture religieuse en Hongrie, exploraient des champs lointains, et jusqu'ici peu connus de l'art du Moyen Âge.

Tandis que les élèves suivaient et approfondissaient ainsi les données de leur maître, celui-ci se tournait déjà vers de nouvelles recherches. Pour compléter l'étude de la sculpture romane, il examina attentivement les peintures murales de la même époque. Et c'est là que la souplesse de sa méthode, son sentiment des nuances et des infinies variations de l'esprit humain, se montre clairement. Au lieu de chercher à réduire brutalement la peinture romane aux mêmes formules que la sculpture, il se montre sensible aux différences de traitement inhérentes à des techniques différentes : "Dans la pierre où elles sont taillées, les images sont forcées de se plier à de rigoureuses contraintes et de suivre des lois particulières. Sur les parois où elles prennent place, où elles se développent, les compositions peintes, bien qu'elles s'accordent à toute la décoration qu'elles complètent, semblent appartenir, non à un autre âge, mais presque à une autre région de l'esprit. Elles ne présentent pas, ou seulement à titre exceptionnel, ces combinaisons chiffrées, ces méandres de la forme, ces replis étroitement serrés qui sont habituels dans la sculpture. On dirait que l'homme et la bête y prennent leur revanche des tortures, de la métamorphose, et que, redevenus eux-mêmes, ils reintègrent l'ordre des êtres naturels." Et cependant le respect de l'architecture se fait sentir sous un autre aspect : "C'est l'examen de la technique qui nous fait le mieux sentir comment la peinture romane est en harmonie avec son support et comment, ainsi que la sculpture, mais d'une autre manière, elle est encore de l'architecture. Le respect du mur domine les compositions claires ou sombres, vides ou parquetées de bandes . . . les fonds nous imposent l'idée

d'une limite ou d'une stabilité. Ils ne cherchent pas à créer un faux espace, ils ne font pas chanceler la muraille en la creusant de fausses perspectives et de lointains imités."

Si l'on peut définir certaines des lois générales qui caractérisent la peinture murale romane, les groupes locaux, les diverses sources d'inspiration et l'individualité des artistes introduisent des variantes: L'école du Sud-Ouest — avec les ensembles grandioses de Saint Savin, le temple de Saint Jean à Poitiers, l'étrange crypte de Cravant — est la plus importante. Elle se caractérise par l'emploi des terres, "des tons mats sur des fonds lumineux et calmes," par des figures allongées d'une belle monumentalité. En Berry les maîtres qui peignent les murs de l'église de Vicq sont d'une originalité plus vigoureuse, leur palette est rehaussée de tons rouges et ocres, le mouvement qui anime les figures est plus violent.

La peinture clunysienne — à la chapelle du prieuré de Cluny, à Berzé la Ville — plonge à une tout autre source. Elle relève de la tradition byzantine avec l'emploi des glacis, avec des tons composés, des recherches de modelés. Cette peinture à fond sombre se retrouve encore en Bourgogne même, en Auvergne à Montmorillon. "Ainsi s'opposent et se pénètrent deux formes d'art, dont l'une relève de la tradition byzantine tandis que l'autre, malgré des modèles et des souvenirs appartenant à un vieux passé oriental filtré par des expériences originales, semble l'expression plus directe d'une pensée d'Occident." Ici encore on retrouve le point de vue original du maître. Jusqu'alors les peintures murales romanes avaient été étudiées surtout d'après des relevés du Trocadéro; il leur redonne leur accent vrai en analysant les techniques, la palette du peintre, la composition de fonds; il leur rend leur éclairage véritable les replaçant dans leur cadre architectural. Il ne les considère pas comme de simples documents iconographiques mais comme de réelles oeuvres d'art. Et ainsi il rend aux peintres de Saint Savin, de Vicq ou de Tavant leur place dans le développement du grand art monumental du Moyen Age. "De même que les diverses solutions apportées par nos artistes aux problèmes de l'équilibre et de l'éclairage d'un édifice voûté ont donné lieu à cette richesse d'aspect que présentent les écoles romanes, de même que les ateliers de sculpteurs, procédant à des expériences parallèles et travaillant selon de mêmes règles, produisent des oeuvres exemptes de toute monotonie, de même les peintres de nos pays nous offrent une diversité remarquable d'inspiration et de talents. C'est là le signe d'une vitalité profonde et — qu'elle qu'ait été l'autorité des modèles et des sources — un don de jaillissement."

Voici donc définis les deux grands aspects de l'art roman. Restait à en approfondir les sources immédiates — ce XI Siècle trop négligé et mal connu. Ce sera la dernière phase de son enseignement. Mais Henri Focillon, avide de champs de recherches nouveaux, parcourt pendant ses dix années de cours en Sorbonne et à l'Institut d'Art et d'Archéologie, tout le cycle de l'art du Moyen Age. L'élaboration du style gothique, et les violentes discussions sur l'origine de la croisée d'ogives



le retiennent, et toujours prêt au combat, il prend position ; le XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle aussi ne le laissera pas indifférent, et c'est avec des points de vue nouveaux, par exemple, qu'il donne à la Cathédrale de Bourges, une place à part dans l'histoire des cathédrales. Il mène parallèlement à son enseignement sur l'art roman, des enquêtes d'un tout autre ordre, témoins son cours sur Piero della Francesca, ses conférences sur Rembrandt, sur Pisanello, ou celles qu'il fit à l'Université de Londres sur Cézanne, Gauguin et Van Gogh. Mais c'est le Moyen Age finissant qui va le retenir plus longuement, et là encore il apporte sa contribution personnelle, il renouvelle avec un sens subtil des valeurs l'étude de l'art flamboyant. Il y voit surtout les monuments de féerie qui avaient enchanté les Romantiques, et les fantaisies déréglées de la fin du Moyen Age, y cherchant les échos d'une période tourmentée. Il s'attache moins aux problèmes d'origine, aux discussions de date et de lieu qu'au problème plus général de la "décomposition" d'un style qui, d'une logique et d'une rigueur absolues au XIII<sup>e</sup> et au XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècles, tend ensuite vers la confusion.<sup>1</sup> "La structure perd son sens et acquiert une valeur de décor . . .," les colonnes deviennent moulures, les arcs boutants sont des contre courbes. "Il y a là au sens propre du terme une étrange déviation du sens des fonctions sous un besoin despotique de l'effet."

Il cherche dans l'art de la fin du Moyen Age un phénomène analogue à celui qui avait caractérisé la fin de l'art roman, et une confirmation de la théorie qui lui était chère sur les diverses étapes de la vie d'un style: "Les styles ne naissent ni ne meurent d'un seul coup. Ils sont préparés par des expériences multiples, ils trouvent à un certain moment leur point de maturité et ce que l'on peut appeler une définition organique, enfin ils se défont, donnant lieu à des phénomènes en sens divers, dessèchement ou luxuriance déréglée."<sup>2</sup> "Cette luxuriance déréglée, ce goût de l'effet et de la couleur s'attaque aux principes fondamentaux de la structure . . . elle combat à l'extérieur la puissance et la stabilité des masses."

"Ce tourment d'un style, cette sensibilité si vive, ce luxe, ce désordre même sont d'accord avec la vie morale du siècle et contribuent à colorer ses valeurs essentielles." Ici s'affirme de nouveau la force des milieux historiques. Cet extraordinaire Moyen Age déclinant avec ses mystiques violents, avec ses visions de mort et de jugement dernier, son sens du macabre, avec son "irréalisme spirituel," son "optique de théâtre qui n'a pas besoin de théâtre pour s'exercer," trouve son expression dans l'enchevêtrement des voûtes à liernes et à tiercerons, dans ces "flammes de pierre" que sont les réseaux des fenêtres et des triforiums, dans les "fracas de draperies" des prophètes de Sluter, dans les paysages visionnaires des *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, dans la "philosophie du microcosme" des Van Eyck.

Période de contrastes, où Focillon se complait à opposer les recherches

1. *Art d'Occident*, p. 180.

2. *Le Style Monumental dans l'Art de Jean Fouquet*, dans: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," 1936, p. 17.

nouvelles d'effets pittoresques, de formes fantastiques et mouvementées, aux survivances d'un style plus ancien.<sup>3</sup> "Il y aurait intérêt à chercher comment se comporte l'art de la fin du Moyen Age à l'égard de ce que nous appellerions volontiers la science perdue": "Certaines gargouilles semblent être nées de l'imagination romane; dans les portails comme celui de Saint Wulfran d'Abbeville, la composition sculptée est encore subordonnée au cadre du tympan," "le chiffre de la composition est un chiffre roman." Cette force despotique du cadre se retrouve encore dans certains retables de Van der Weyden, dans des pages des *Antiquités Judaïques*. Fouquet "rejoint et fait revivre le grand style monumental élaboré en France depuis trois siècles . . . ; il est l'héritier direct de ces imagiers qui, de la fin du XII à la fin du XIII Siècle taillèrent des statues pour décorer l'architecture de nos églises en les accordant avec elle" . . . "Ainsi à travers le Moyen Age une tradition ancienne rejoint les formes modernes qu'elle se trouve préparer."

L'instinct de Focillon l'avait donc bien servi, et ses études si nouvelles et si originales sur l'art de la fin du Moyen Age, loin d'être une simple digression, viennent compléter ses recherches sur l'art roman. Dictées par une même méthode, elles lui fournissent des preuves multiples de l'enchaînement des styles: "Les époques ne meurent pas d'un seul coup, elles se prolongent dans la vie de l'esprit."

Parallèlement à ses cours sur l'art de la fin du Moyen Age il mène une enquête toute différente, revenant à des problèmes qu'il avait esquissés dans son *Art des Sculpteurs Romains*. Ses conférences au Collège de France sur le haut Moyen Age et ses discussions de séminaire répondent à cette inquiétude qu'il avait de mieux êtreindre les problèmes d'origine de la sculpture romane; le XI Siècle — "ce socle du Moyen-Age" — devait lui en donner la clef.

Il rend toute son importance à cette période jusque là négligée: le XI Siècle "crée une première architecture romane, étendue sur une aire considérable, il voit naître l'ogive, enfin l'histoire de la sculpture romane serait radicalement fausse si l'on ne tenait pas compte de ces cent années d'expériences plus nombreuses et systématiques qu'on ne l'avait cru jusqu'ici."

Ses méthodes ont évolué, les problèmes historiques le préoccupent davantage, et il renforce de toute une série de démonstrations, les théories qu'il avait esquissées dans son enseignement en Sorbonne et dans ses *Sculpteurs Romains*. Il définit avec force les divers milieux dans lesquels se jouent les principales expériences qui préparent l'art roman:<sup>4</sup> milieux encore tout carolingiens de la Germanie othonienne, fidèles aux traditions impériales, milieux complexes de l'Espagne mozarabe et wisigothique, milieux conservateurs de la Champagne, de la Normandie, milieux novateurs de la Loire et du Centre.

De nouveau une équipe d'étudiants entraînés par son élan, se met sous sa direc-

3. *Quelques Survivances de la Sculpture Romane dans l'Art Français*, dans: *Mélanges Porter*, vol. 2.

4. *Recherches Récentes sur la Sculpture Romane en France au XI Siècle*, dans: "Bulletin Monumental," 1938.



tion à parcourir la France à la recherche de documents. Le but, cette fois-ci, est d'établir un *Corpus* de la sculpture du XI Siècle.

Inoubliables sont les heures de discussion passionnée, pendant lesquelles quelques uns d'entre eux écoutent le maître commenter les matériaux qu'ils rapportent de chacune de leurs expéditions. Avec le talent extraordinaire que Focillon avait de voir "à travers le document," d'y déchiffrer des solutions tout d'abord insoupçonnées, de l'éclairer d'une lumière nouvelle, des éléments d'abord épars se coordonnaient, et avant son dernier départ pour les Etats-Unis, il put esquisser une histoire de la sculpture au XI Siècle, qui confirmait toutes ses prévisions. Il y montrait que certains sculpteurs, fidèles au passé classique, continuent jusqu'au XII Siècle l'art des frises et des personnages sous arcades emprunté aux sarcophages; que d'autres, fidèles aux traditions mérovingiennes, continuent le décor géométrique des bijoux barbares sur les chapiteaux de Champagne et d'Ile de France, tandis que, d'autre part, des solutions nouvelles apparaissent et des motifs commencent à se combiner sur la corbeille des chapiteaux, comme le montrent deux ateliers de sculpteurs particulièrement novateurs — Vignory et Saint Benoît sur Loire. Ainsi à une date antérieure à celle qui avait été adoptée jusque là, en plein XI Siècle,<sup>5</sup> apparaît un style déjà roman.

Dans son étude sur Saint Etienne de Vignory, Focillon affirme ses soucis d'historien; avec une précision convainquante il démontre que les sculpteurs de la nef, à la fin du X Siècle et au début du XI Siècle, sont encore fidèles aux traditions géométriques alors que les sculpteurs du rondpoint, au milieu du XI Siècle, inaugurent un style nouveau, "une conception plus architecturale du décor. Les bêtes affrontées ou adossées, combinées avec des palmettes qui les surmontent, avec des crosses végétales qui les encadrent appartiennent à un ordre qui exerce déjà sa rigueur . . ." Ce sont les mêmes combinaisons de décor que nous retrouvons dans les ateliers de St. Germain des Prés dans le premier tiers du XI Siècle et dans les ateliers de Saint Benoît sur Loire sous l'abbatit de Gauzlin.

Ainsi s'esquissait cette vaste enquête. Hélas, la tâche est restée inachevée, et l'on pouvait craindre qu'il ne subsiste de tant de recherches que les indications préliminaires que nous venons de résumer. Mais nous avons eu, depuis la libération de Paris, une preuve éclatante de la manière dont Focillon avait su animer ce groupe d'étudiants qui l'entourait, si bien qu'à la nouvelle de sa mort, en pleine occupation allemande, ils ont commencé, au moyen de ses notes qu'ils avaient sauvées, à reconstituer les grandes lignes de l'édifice ébauché, et à remettre en train les recherches interrompues.

Ils se sont efforcés aussi, au moyen de ses notes et des leurs, à reconstituer beaucoup de cours qui n'avaient jamais été publiés, et ainsi jusqu'au bout la figure de Focillon nous apparaît entourée de son cortège d'élèves, les animant de son

5. *L'Eglise de Saint Etienne de Vignory, ses Pâtes de Construction*, dans: "Revue Archéologique," 1937, p. 13.

esprit, et s'appuyant sur eux. Et beaucoup seraient enclins à lui dire ces paroles qu'il adressait un jour à Gustave Geoffroy: "Vous nous avez appris à nous dépouiller de toute sécheresse, à ne pas nous confiner dans la spécialité d'un goût rare, à dominer la chose écrite, à choisir, à lutter. Par là, vous nous avez touchés et conduits."<sup>6</sup> C'est en effet par cette absence de sécheresse, par ses qualités d'artiste et de poète, par son don de divination aussi, que tous ceux qui l'ont entendu le définissent le mieux. Focillon était avant tout amateur de la chose belle, et c'est ce goût de l'oeuvre d'art qu'il a su communiquer avec passion à ses élèves. Comme il les aimait les choses dont il parlait . . . comme il savait les décrire avec des mots étincelants, avec une flamme qui animait le grand amphithéâtre de la Sorbonne ou les salles du Collège de France!

Au moment particulièrement émouvant où les monuments qu'il avait si souvent regardés de son oeil de myope qui savait découvrir mille détails cachés, nous sont rendus les uns intacts, les autres hélas mutilés, écoutons-le les décrire, — et ce sera la meilleure manière d'achever d'évoquer son visage de maître inspiré: "J'ai vu les cathédrales de l'Ile de France se dresser au sommet des villes, sur leurs buttes de terre, comme de prodigieux châteaux et attirer jusqu'à elles de longues rangées de maisons. J'ai vu Bourges, pressé, circonvenu de toutes parts, assiégé par des verdures, des pignons et des toits, et au bord du plateau de Beauce, dominant une faille au pied de laquelle l'Eure se divise et se multiplie, Chartres et sa double flèche se profiler sur d'incomparables cieux clairs. Sur son île, dans sa solitude de pierre et d'eau Notre Dame m'émeut davantage; elle se marie, non au sol ou à la bâtisse, mais à la Seine qui a fait Paris. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

1945.

FRANÇOISE HENRY.  
GENEVIÈVE MARCH-MICHEL.



6. *Technique et Sentiment*, Paris, 1919.

7. *L'Ile Oubliée*, 1920.





# *SURVIVANCES ET REVEILS*

**M**Y MEMORIES of four years as Henri Focillon's assistant at Yale University are punctuated by a series of narrow escapes from which he was constantly emerging. He was forever on the verge of pitching down staircases or, in the ardor of a lecture, about to walk right off the speaker's platform. Often he managed to get a foot tangled in any available extension cord. If you sat in the front row, he arched over you like a gargoyle; so precariously was he held in place that each of his words had the impact of being the last word. You did not miss one of them.

If the foregoing seems a facetious approach to one of the most remarkable minds of our time, it is not so intended. For out of his visual infirmity Henri Focillon created by sheer will-power a technique of analytic and synthetic vision. If he "saw" imperfectly by pedestrian standards, he discovered both the little details and the larger forms of things more acutely than do most mortals.

Once I was trying to identify a lantern slide which had lost its label. I saw an amorphous mass of proto-Romanesque masonry in the shape of a tower. *Le patron* asked to see it. He held the little picture about an inch from his thick glasses, and quickly pronounced a name. I recalled some obscure relief sculpture. I had seen only a tower. "You must have missed the frieze," he said. It was so small I could just make it out. "*Mon oeil fait loupe*," he explained. When I projected the slide on a screen I saw what he had seen.

When we visited Radio City together, I guided him down the steps to the sunken plaza. This was before the days of the flags, the flowers, and the skaters. As he craned his neck in his special bearlike manner, I wondered how much he could see of this lithic desert. "We are Early Christians in the arena," he said, "the lions will come out from over there." I decided he could see enough.

Later, we looked far down on Central Park from an adjoining skyscraper: there were children playing, many little boats, the zoo, all fenced in by the cliff of Fifth Avenue façades. "Central Park is the lungs of New York," he remarked.

How could a man with such vision see so much more than we, both in general and in particular? I think the answer lay in two highly developed qualities of Henri Focillon's mind: memory and imagination. Behind his bottle-like lenses, his eyes became instruments of Van Eyckian precision. He remembered all the discoveries of his optical explorations. By a reverse process he could eliminate detail at will in order to lay bare the shape and construction of things. He developed an extreme sensitiveness to mass in architecture, volume in painting, equilibrium in sculpture.

One other quality of Henri Focillon was indispensable for his development. This was his broad human understanding. Every student felt his tremendous personal magnetism and the deep interest he took in each individual. He was incurably optimistic about the capabilities of those he taught. As his assistant I sometimes thought he was going to suffer disillusionment, but under his instruction even the faltering student developed confidence and grew in mental stature. Many times the result exceeded all reasonable expectation. Henri Focillon had the priceless talent of making you feel at your best, and you gave more than you thought you had.

He carried this warm understanding into his study of the past. Knowing artists by having grown up with them and by being one himself — Henri Focillon's drawings, which he regarded as relaxation, would make an interesting study — he approached a work of art by attempting to recreate the mind that made it. He explored the tensions of that mind, its limitations, what was imposed by physical medium and social milieu, and how the artist imposed his will on all of these. He always insisted on discovering the individual mind. He abhorred artistic pigeonholes. He was careful to be guided by historical documents as far as they would lead. But all of this was bare bones. The work could only be comprehended by an act of trained and disciplined imagination. Thus he could people the ambulatory of Mori-



enval with sculptors engaged in a kind of artistic civil war. Between Paris and Laon Cathedrals — so neatly grouped by many scholars — he clarified a wide divergence of intention. A work of art was never an “example of,” but something unique and precious.

With esthetics as commonly practiced, he had little patience. His was a profoundly philosophical mind, but he believed with all his heart that a historically trained imagination is indispensable to anyone undertaking the study of esthetics. He deplored abstractions like “the artist,” also any consideration of art without reference to history or lacking the sense of history. A work of art, he taught, is a document in time and place. Variation, multiplicity is the life of art. Any unity which the esthetician (another abhorrent word) might arrive at could only be an artist’s point of departure. Artists are as varied as nature, even within a rigid social and technical *cadre* like that imposed in Romanesque times. We are too likely to stop at a *cadre* and forget to look for an artist. From such a collection of works as the cloister of Moissac, Henri Focillon distilled individual artists — many and varied. He grouped them by families: cousins of Borromini and Claus Sluter, cousins of the Selinus sculptors and those of Han China. All kinds of men are always alive, he taught, and it is well to look beyond the moment to discover the man or at least the kind of man. But the unique experience we seek to understand existed at a certain moment in time and in space. All time must be telescoped into that instant, and yet that instant remains unique, something to be treasured.

The kernel of Henri Focillon’s thought is contained in the subtitle of his last book: *Moyen Age: Survivances et Réveils*. These eleven essays were written over a period of twenty years; the insistence upon the *idée maîtresse* illustrates his constancy of purpose.

Survival and reawakening! Nothing wholly dies, nothing is wholly divorced from what has been. Even as passive survival, the past is a potential force. One may expect unaccountable resurgences. Prehistory, to take an unlikely example, recurs throughout the Middle Ages. Focillon reveals its trace not only in the well-known animalized ornament, but in menhir worship, sun worship, in the Wild Men of late Gothic heraldic compositions, in the cave-man, St. Jeromes, in Patinir’s rocky landscapes, and even in Andrea Mantegna — *ce poète épique d’une nature toute minérale*.

Romanesque forms, gradually disappearing in early and high Gothic art, recur abruptly in late Gothic art. In their search for a monumental effect, the XV Century painters sometimes approximated Romanesque methods. Rogier van der Weyden’s Beaune altarpiece is not only a tympanum in composition, but it is broken into rectangles like a Romanesque tympanum; and his *Descent from the Cross* (Escorial) has the projecting rectangle used at Vézelay in the central portal to emphasize the head of Christ. Romanesque forms appear in the portals of St. Vul-

fran d'Abbeville, sharply juxtaposed to the latest importations from Renaissance Italy.

Such unexpected discoveries, which the fresh eye of Henri Focillon was forever turning up (or training his students to turn up), are like grace notes in the broader structure of his thought. He understood Gauguin as an artist, a Frenchman, and a XIX Century revolutionary. He wrote absorbingly of all this in the catalogues of the Gauguin exhibitions organized some years ago by the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts" in Paris and the Wildenstein Gallery in New York. It did not preclude his calling Gauguin, between commas on another occasion, "*ce bourgeois péruvien*."

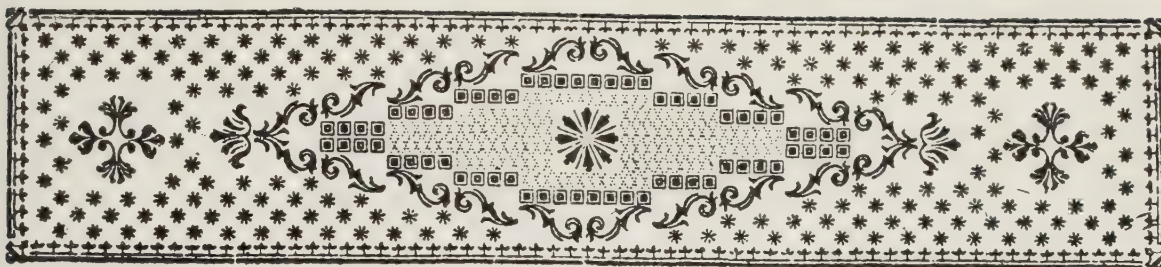
Like all great teachers and all great Frenchmen, Henri Focillon had a passion for generalization. But his estimates, however sweeping, always left room for something unexpected. When it appeared, his eye did not miss it, and his mind welcomed it as a sign of life. Signs of life, he taught, point to undiscovered relationships, to a deeper understanding of what he called the *Life of Forms in Art*.

January, 1945.

S. L. FAISON, JR.







# HENRI FOCILLON

## AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

**A**T A TIME when international understanding is so vital to the cause of peace, we are becoming increasingly aware of how great a part in the service of that cause can be played by international "intellectual" cooperation, or "cultural" cooperation as it is now more commonly referred to. And we feel that among the cultural activities designed to strengthen mutual understanding between peoples, artistic cooperation should be given an ever larger place. However, in initiating new activities, we must not fail to benefit from those of the past. When selected with discrimination, these can give valuable impetus to new accomplishments.

The life of Henri Focillon constitutes precisely such a source of inspiration.

Indeed, even if Henri Focillon had not made a direct contribution to international intellectual cooperation as he did make, the lesson of his life alone would serve as a guide. The very fact which made possible the publication of the present

volume—that is to say, the many articles contributed by Focillon's colleagues, friends, pupils, disciples and admirers—is in itself an inspiration. While it is primarily a tribute to the scholar, it also serves to enhance the prestige of the country in which he was born. Throughout the centuries, France has found her best ambassadors in her artists, her writers, and her scholars. And this volume is another proof of the great wealth of French science, thought and spirit that one man alone—Henri Focillon—succeeded in representing in the space of a short lifetime.

But it is hardly necessary to dilate on the philosophical and political value of Focillon's personal contribution to our science—and thereby to the prestige of France—in order to stress all that international intellectual cooperation owes him. Along with so many other activities belonging to his chosen profession as a scholar, that man found the time to do actual field work in the vast domain of international relations. We may even say that his many direct contributions to the consolidation of such relations were so numerous and so broad, that they could easily have filled the entire life of a less generously endowed personality.

We know that Focillon strongly disliked flattery—an evil all too common in human relationships. He had the same attitude even toward posthumous praise. It was this characteristic of Focillon's which determined the program we assigned ourselves in the preparation of the present memorial volume: to compose it chiefly of contributions to the science which he served, and to include in it only a limited number of articles on Focillon himself. We felt that the spirit of the great man would rejoice most in finding in the scholarly articles of this volume a continuation of the many vistas he opened up in the field of our studies, considering them the best evidence that the traditions he cherished, and the beliefs he professed, were being kept alive after his physical departure had interrupted the magnificent course of his action. We hoped also that the few personal recollections included would not offend his innate modesty, provided we offered the hospitality of this volume only to such of them which might serve as a model for those who would follow in his footsteps.

But this revival of the memories of Focillon's activities in the field of international relations is not to be confused with an attempt at flattery, praise or even appraisal. Their chief value lies not so much in the personal record they help to crystallize, as in the guidance which they offer to future endeavors. The need for such guidance has been strongly experienced in the last years, and is now—in the so-called postwar period—sharply felt all over the world.

I was personally experiencing this need when circumstances took a hand in directing me also toward international cooperation. Everyone who is active in the field of art is in some way brought to share in the task of international cooperation. I have done so myself, sometimes as an individual, sometimes in charge of government projects. But it is not enough to make just one more or less casual, or one



more or less conscious contribution. Individual action in that direction can be of no real value unless it proceeds from a well defined basic approach. I have sensed this especially since Focillon's death. Perhaps it is because we lost him at the most critical time in the history of the world; perhaps it is because of the dawning realization that, confronted by the many problems inherent in the fostering of international artistic relations, we can no longer turn for encouragement or advice to the man whose constant presence was so reassuring. In any case, I sensed — as so many others must have — how necessary it was that the particular efforts of individuals, as well as of nations, toward better mutual relations — be consistently organized around a single dominant thought. And, as we consider Focillon's example closer, we see how systematically — whether deliberately or not — each and every one of the many phases of this man's labors always followed a general underlying thought.

The evolution through which that basic thought of Henri Focillon's has passed may be identified with the very development of that period of our civilization which coincided with Focillon's lifetime. The study of this evolution, therefore, expands far beyond the frame of a single man's portrait. Such a study had to be included in this volume. Henri Focillon cherished the American edition of the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts" as an aid in the furthering of international relations, and to that end generously supported and helped its founding. In fact, this article, in bringing out the main trends which led to Focillon's part in the promotion of world peace, is an attempt to repay a debt much greater than can be expressed in words.

We must emphasize that this is far from being a biographical sketch, or a survey of the historic sequence of events in a man's life, orienting the evolution of his actions and aspirations. It would be preposterous to present such a sketch, of which he alone could have been the author. His evolution may have been conscious and deliberate, as in fact we believe it was. But even if it had not been, all its implications seem to us irrefutable, and it is in these implications that we find the great lasting value of the lesson his life represents. In other words, it means that at this moment we regard Focillon's personality and life as we would a work of art, perhaps even the work of art of an anonymous creator. The greatest value of that work is not in its actual purpose as conceived by the man who created it. Whatever this purpose may have been, its eternal importance will be measured by what the succeeding generations will find in it, and by all that, in its great silence, the masterpiece will express to them, and will teach them.

However, in the despairing silence which confronts us in studying the masterpiece of Focillon's life, some echoes of those rare and precious confessions which remain impressed on the memory of those who heard them, still resound.

Long before European civilization was so profoundly shaken, Focillon saw the menace that was threatening its foundation. He viewed it as a kind of inevitable end of a historic cycle. Because he considered it as such, he realized, perhaps better than anyone else, that it was unavoidable; that it was the result of an immutable law of nature. But coupled with this realization, was the certitude that the survival of the old civilization would be assured by another historic cycle, whose birth was just as unavoidable, just as much an immutable law of nature, as was the decline of the former. He knew that the next stage in our civilization would be an American one. The keen foresight of Focillon's vision made him see clearly that the moment was no longer far off when the United States, its roots embedded in the rich soil of the European outgrowth of Greek and Latin civilizations, would, in turn, have to take the lead, and offer to the now old and weakened peoples of Europe the invigorating stimulus of their own youthful civilization. From that realization to the profound wisdom of Focillon's approach to international relations is just a step.

We would fall into a mere listing of biographical details if we were to try here to recall the innumerable inter-European intellectual and artistic activities in which Focillon took part. Together with Valery and Madariaga he became one of the pillars for any initiative taken along that line under the auspices of the League of Nations. He participated in many other undertakings at the side of Henri Bonnet — now French Ambassador to the United States — then Director of the International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation created by the League of Nations, whose functions, in the present United Nations organization, have in extended or modified form, been taken over by UNESCO. He took charge of many missions outside of France with which the University of Paris entrusted him. There was hardly an event related to French art in any part of Europe which was not supported by Focillon's sponsorship or, more often, by his always generously effective assistance. And to these many official missions must be added the long list of those which he was constantly engaging in on his own behalf — going on lecture tours, keeping a wide personal correspondence with representatives of the European intellectual and artistic world, finding enough time to open his door and his heart to every foreign person, initiative, or idea. Especially was he always happy to welcome foreign students and to guide them through the melting pot which he so deeply desired and helped the University of Paris to remain.

However, the point we wish to stress is that after having spent the first years following World War I in traveling from one end of Europe to the other, and working for better relations among the peoples of the old continent, there came a moment when Focillon must have felt acutely that it was too late for the old world to serve as guardian of peace without the help of the young nation on the other side of the Atlantic. And he turned to the United States as the only hope for the



preservation of our world, our principles and our way of life, long before the outbreak of war gave this hope the character of an emergency.

Gradually the emphasis in the orientation of his life was placed on the consolidation of Franco-American friendship. It would be superfluous to recall here how much that still vital cause owes to his efforts. He is too well and too universally honored as the great exponent of the French spirit in the United States and of the American spirit in France.

The very hard assignment which he took upon himself at the expense of his health and, as we now know, of his very life, when he added a Yale professorship to his heavy University schedule in France, has become the expression and the symbol of his conviction in regard to the impending turn in the fate of the civilized world.

Focillon's students at Yale were offered, through the medium of his teachings, the ferment of the old civilization. They became — as is illustrated by some of the most valuable contributions to this volume — the fervent and devoted disciples of French and Latin culture.

But Focillon's students in France found him teaching a truth which very few Europeans before this war were willing to hear, and even less were bold enough to express. They were taught humility before the youthful spirit of a new civilization not theirs, and of which they were, in turn, to become the fervent and devoted disciples.

Focillon's students at Yale received the best tools for the eventuality of their having to invigorate the waning civilization of Europe. Through the man who offered them an exceptional humanistic knowledge of both the technical elements and the general and profound spirit of the architecture of Medieval Europe, they were unconsciously prepared for the duty that lay before them as contributors to the architecture of Europe's future.

Focillon's students in France were educated in the spirit of modesty before the heritage of the long tradition of which they were by birth the standard-bearers. Their eyes were directed toward all the unknown values which the accomplishments of the United States were reserving for the benefit of the world. Thus, more than any other Europeans, they were gradually conditioned for the shock of the war and for the coming of a new cycle in history, which so painfully struck the so many who ignored reality. Those of his French students and disciples who survived the shock have entered the post-war period armed with the indispensable consciousness of the new balance of civilizations which will determine the shape of the coming world.

Both the American and French students of Focillon will probably be among the best servants of the rehabilitation of Europe, and the best builders of the civilization under which we aspire to live.

That this could be said without fear of exaggeration would probably have been considered by Focillon as the highest reward for his work. However, his parallel Yale-Paris activity is recalled here chiefly for its broad and inspiring aspect.

It represents the ultimate phase of evolution in the mind of one of the greatest thinkers of our time. Had fate not assigned such a brief term to that evolution, Henri Focillon would have helped the intellectual world today to follow the roads for which he paved the way.

In the absence of that enlightening leadership, our duty lies in pausing on the threshold of these roads to fully comprehend his message. Its deep meaning as we consider it from the viewpoint of international relations, rests on the respect of knowledge, on the unceasing search for truth.

How indispensable for every effort toward international cooperation is knowledge — knowledge of ourselves, of other peoples and, above all, mutual knowledge — can be measured by the difficulties encountered by such efforts in the past.

It was an excellent idea to bring to London, only one year after V-J Day, so varied and so instructive an exhibition of American paintings as that organized by the best museum staffs of the United States, and shown at the Tate Gallery. Unfortunately, we know how imperfectly it has served to make American painting, and through it, the American people, understood by the British. One would have expected that two nations with a common language and culture would be more likely to understand each other's art than would any other two peoples in the world. Why this did not happen was apparently due not only to the lack of mutual understanding, but also to the inability of each people to understand itself. To make ourselves known to others, we must first know ourselves. And we must know a great deal about the art and the history of another people to be able to understand any particular chapter in a particular period of its art.

The disappointment that was experienced with regard to last summer's exhibition of American paintings in London, was also felt with regard to the exhibition of American art at the Museum of the Jeu de Paume in Paris in the interwar period, and to another one which, with the assistance of Mr. Henry McBride, we organized ourselves on the eve of the war in London. It was felt also with regard to a number of foreign exhibitions in the United States, which only gives additional support for our theory.

We have come to realize that knowledge engenders sympathy; that as we study a thing more closely we get to like it more and more. If the visitors to the London exhibition had had an opportunity beforehand to study American art and all that lies back of it, before viewing the selected American paintings brought to the Tate Gallery for their pleasure, they would undoubtedly have had an entirely different approach to that exhibition.



The success of this particular undertaking toward promoting international understanding and, subsequently, international cooperation, was handicapped for two reasons: too little had been done in the years preceding that event to make American art known and understood in Great Britain, and too little had been done to make it understood in its own country, since the American people are only now beginning to appreciate the value of their own art fully enough to explain it adequately abroad.

We will refrain from going into other instances of this type, as that would only lead to the same conclusions. We hope that this one experience may be eloquent enough to stress the importance of studies within countries, and the exchange of studies between different countries, as the basis for international cooperation and ultimately for unity.

Of course, in the case of exchange exhibitions, which rank among the best tools for the promotion of international cultural relations, a certain amount of collateral information — a kind of digest of underlying currents and related events — might well be supplied for popular use in connection with such exhibitions. Incidentally, some excellent attempts of this character have already been made. However, we do not wish to enter into such details here, desiring only to stress the general spirit within which it is indispensable that each manifestation in the field under discussion be prepared.

When Focillon went on his endless lecture tours all over Europe, and later all over the United States, Central and South America, he carried with him such immense and profound knowledge of his own country, and of all the countries of the world, that everyone who listened to him fell deeply in love with the subject of his discourse, with the country he represented, with all the countries he knew, and especially with the desire for world understanding and for enduring peace, which animated the great lecturer.

In life we learn the painful truth that no one is irreplaceable. But we have begun to realize that the place of Focillon will never be taken by anyone else; that even in his lifetime, it could not be filled by any other person. At the outbreak of the war, and particularly at the time France fell, he became one of the greatest French envoys in this country. On the eve of the declaration of war, when crowds of people were fleeing Paris, when the roads of France were jammed with thick streams of people, cars and animals, all rushing from the capital toward the villages, one car alone was heading in the opposite direction. It was Focillon, leaving the peaceful retreat of his country house in Maranville to report to the Foreign Office and for duty on the front where he belonged, and where he could best serve his country. A few weeks later, in the darkness of the blackout, he sailed for the United States, from which he was never to return.

Just before the summer which ended in war, Focillon left his professorial chair at the Sorbonne to begin a new life of serenity devoted entirely to research at the College de France — the ultimate stage of a great scholar's life, to which every French scholar looks forward as the best years of his life. The man who had done perhaps more than any other to preserve peace, was prevented by war from the enjoyment of those quiet years at the highest scholarly institution of France. When the war came, he felt that a stronger duty than that in the service of French science, which would have benefited so much from his teachings at the great college, called him away from his own country, to these United States, which — as he had realized long before — represented the only hope for the salvation of our civilization and of peace.

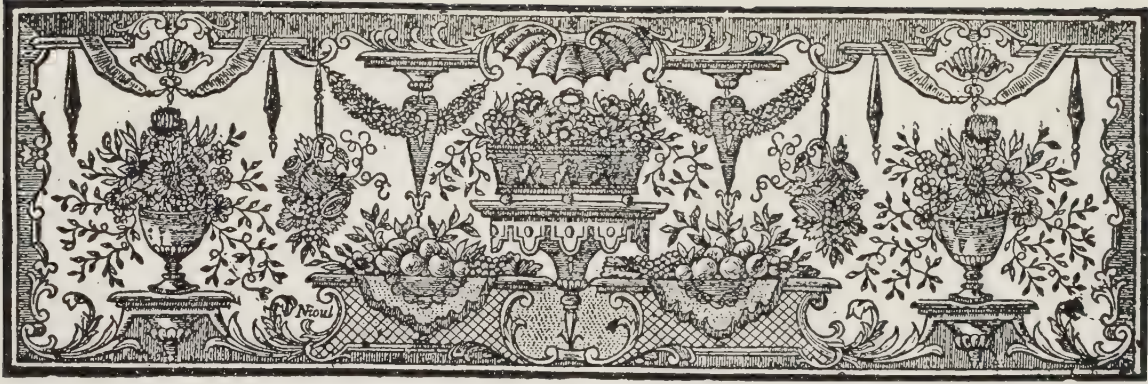
Let us wish that the example of Focillon's life will always remain in the minds of those who will in the future carry the responsibility of international artistic relations. Let us wish that knowledge and study will be given the place they must have as the basis for such relations. And, finally, that the history of art and the initiation into the secrets of art, on which the best of Focillon's time and ardor were always focused, will be given not only in universities but also in secondary schools the same place that is now given to literature, history or the sciences. If this were to become the accepted practice, then following step by step in the paths of Focillon, art would come to play an ever greater part in the cause of peace which Focillon served to his last breath.

1945-1947.

GEORGES WILDENSTEIN.







# FROM A STUDENT'S DIARY

## A TRIBUTE

**H**AD every student of Henri Focillon kept a diary, each of these diaries would present a fascinating fiction-like story of a great teacher's personality and life. Mine would start with the picture of a very small table in a very small room.

Full of anxiety, almost despair, I was waiting my turn in one of the many long and narrow *couloirs* of the Sorbonne crowded with students. The door of the very small room opened. My name was called. I found myself sitting on this — the students' — side of the very small table, which was now my only line of separation from the great man seated on the other — the teachers' — side, bent over in the study of some papers in front of him.

I had never seen him other than from a distance in the large auditoriums of the Sorbonne during his electrifying lectures. I knew he expected his students to visit him. He liked it. But I had never dared to step across the threshold of his personal acquaintanceship. Even when I met him on one of those students' art-trips in which he always tried to share, I disappeared before he could notice the newcomer which I then was in the famous *Groupe*. And now, having been admitted, on the basis of my written work, to the oral examination, I was sitting there, so close, before him, becoming increasingly anxious before each of his gestures — the gestures of an engraver working on precious metals, which he may have inherited from his father, Victor Focillon, whose memory and work he so deeply cherished.

Suddenly he lifted his head as if only then noticing my presence, and focused on me his incisive, warm and illuminating look. Then came the sound of his voice with the question, "You like poetry, don't you?" (because of the few verses I had quoted in my written work); and he smiled: "I do, too." A great friendship, one of those rare gifts of fate, was born.

What that friendship meant to me personally — particularly at the time when I lost my parents — is too great to be recorded outside an intimate diary. But this may be the place for an attempt to recall — even though inadequately — the share of inspiration, advice and guidance which Henri Focillon reserved for me, as a student and a worker in the field of art.

I was the one he chose to further the studies in *art populaire*, or folk art — a term meaning not peasant art, but "art of the people, for the people, by the people," as we finally came to designate it. He had been fascinated by that chapter of the history of art especially after the Congress of Prague in 1928, in which he took an active part. It attracted him perhaps so strongly, because of the many ties between the destinies of art and those of nations which, in that field of study, become so apparent. But he himself could do no more than touch in a general, broad way upon the many problems involved. He wanted a student to probe them deeply and go into details. He would then follow the progress of the research. With one glance, one word, one shrug of his shoulders, he would give it the right, the new, the valuable orientation. This was his great teacher's art, which he practiced on so many of his students, in so many varied and infinite directions.

The way my assignment was carried through should have deceived him. Many reasons — my absorbing association with the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts" being one of the most determining — prevented me from writing, under this high guidance that I was privileged to receive, a doctor's thesis on the subject the *Patron* selected for me. To my recurrent bitter, but rarely expressed, self-reproach for that failure, which he alone felt and measured fully, he would respond vehemently: "But you *will* write your thesis. You *are* writing it — every day — as you think,



as you feel, as you live!" Each time that response gave my spirit new wings — the certainty of that future, of a mission fulfilled.

When, from New Haven, the great shock of his death came, I realized that this had become his legacy to me: he had left me the hope and the strength to pursue unceasingly the goal to which he had taught me to aspire.

The greatness of that goal lies indeed in its potentialities to define the close links which unite the problems of the *arts populaires* to the most vital ones of the modern world — the problems of mutual understanding and lasting peace among all the peoples of the earth.

The history of folk art is, in the last analysis, the history of relations between different peoples. It is not a history of mobile and deliberate relations resulting from conscious action by man; but that of innate, profound and ineradicable relations — or coincidences, as Henri Focillon called them — which exist between all peoples and were present long before they knew of one another.

These old and spontaneous relationships — we might better call them common traits of nature — which show how close in their blood characteristics are the most distant peoples of the world and which are so evident in objects of folk art, have throughout the centuries been increasingly ignored and forgotten. The progress of human intellect and science has relegated practically every modern nation's natural and primitive values to the second plan. They have been lost in the great struggle of man against man, of nation against nation. Brothers have fought each other and allies have become adversaries.

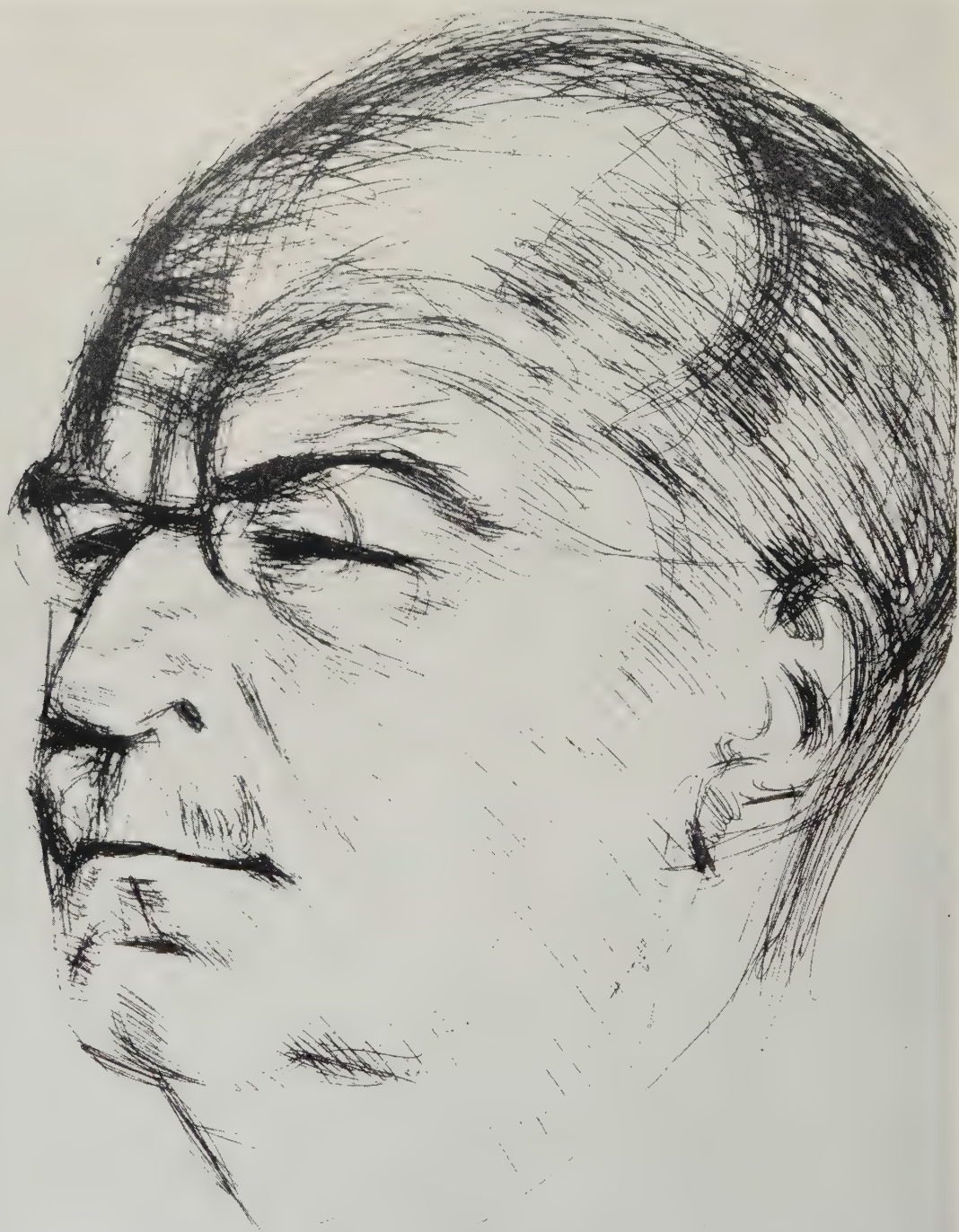
The real task of the historian of folk art lies in the rediscovery of these old and eternal truths upon which our world was created. Because folk art is indeed one of the most genuine expressions of individuals and of peoples, it is in folk art that the purest and most ancient qualities of humanity have been preserved throughout the centuries — in spite of wars and other changes — more than in any other field of human creativeness. The history of folk art in the past is indeed but a series of examples of the many features in common which relate all the peoples of the world. Closer to us it is a series of examples of fruitful exchanges and cross currents of influences which have resulted in the birth of what is called civilization.

We cannot promote mutual understanding and lasting peace between nations unless we constantly keep these relationships in mind and learn to comprehend them. And the study of folk art is among the best means for such realization, its main purpose consisting *in fine* in bringing again to the fore the oldest and the most natural values of humanity.

When, if ever, I fulfill my dream of completing the work based on this broad realization which Henri Focillon helped me to reach, it will be dedicated — to Henri Focillon and to Peace.

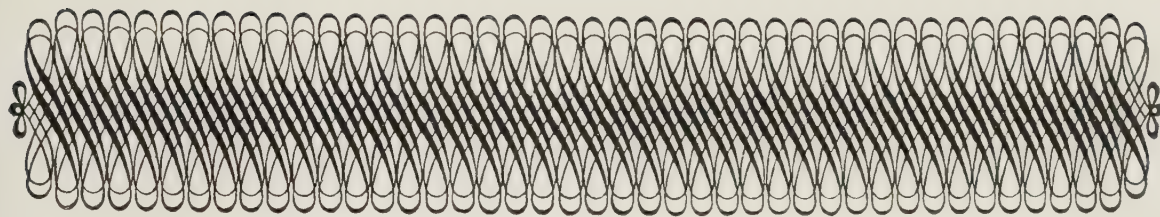
May, 1947.

ASSIA R. VISSON.



THEODORE BRENSON. — A Portrait of Henri Focillon — Etching.





# MODERN ART VERSUS CIVILIZATION

**H**ENRI Focillon, in honor of whose brilliantly creative career this special number of the magazine has been dedicated, opens his remarkable book, *The Life of Forms in Art*, with the following passage:

“Whenever we attempt to interpret a work of art, we are at once confronted with problems that are as perplexing as they are contradictory. A work of art is an attempt to express something that is unique, it is an affirmation of something that is whole, complete, absolute. But it is likewise an integral part of a system of highly complex relationships. A work of art results from an altogether independent activity; it is the translation of a free and exalted dream. But flowing together within it the energies of many civilizations may be plainly discerned.”

Professor Focillon makes it quite clear to us that “the life of forms has absolutely no aim other than itself and its own renewal”; that “primarily form is a mobile life in a changing world.” This may prove singularly helpful to us, alike when we embark upon a study of the vast history of art itself and when, focusing



FIG. 1. — Titian. — Flora. — Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

selves live and of which we are ourselves a part, we learn to perceive such expression—what is quintessential in it—not as something completely isolated, but instead as something profoundly related, in one way or another, to all that has preceded it in time. The aspect of this expression will be new, but its essence will be eternal. It will be seen to embody qualities that are as ancient as those appearing in the earliest of mankind's adventures in art concerning which we have any knowledge, just as it is seen also to embody qualities that reflect the life and the aspiration of the present and that obviously conform to present needs.

The relationship is indeed reciprocal, and, when thus envisioned, can strengthen our understanding of the art both of the past and of today. For in-

rather upon the immediate, we try better, with a more rounded and a deeper vision, to understand the art of our own particular time. With respect to the first we are struck with the phenomenon of an ever fluid continuity; a continuity full of change, yet fed by the springs of a unique motivation, and allegiant to a quest that is at the base constant, changing only in its direct reference to the articulate experience of an individual and to a given age, a given environment, a given culture. With respect to the second endeavor, which relates to the cultural expression of the age in which we our-

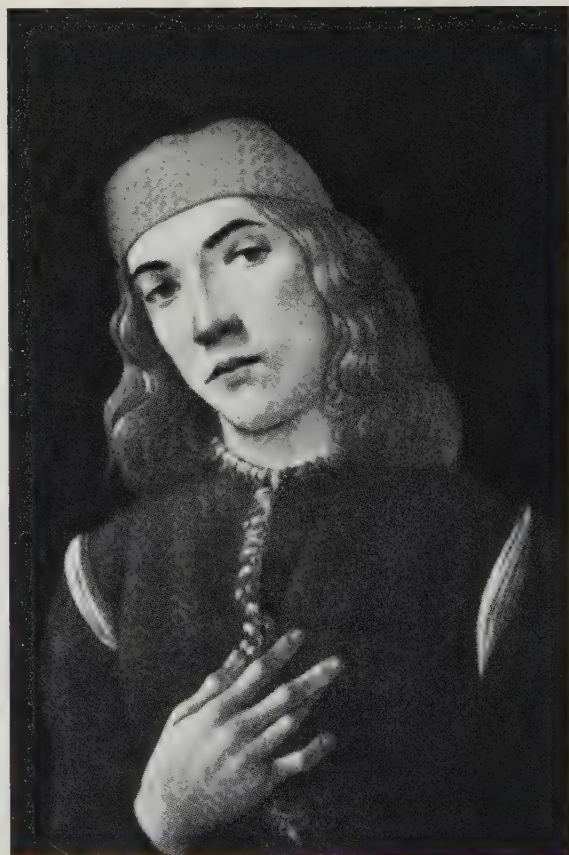


FIG. 2. — Botticelli. — Portrait of a Youth. — Mellon Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.



stance a few years ago the Museum of Modern Art in New York provided us with a kind of climax—or at least with a peculiarly dramatic moment. It was when, so to speak, Picasso moved out and Raphael moved in. That was prior to the beginning of World War II. A group of outstanding old masters, lent by the Italian Government, was exhibited in the same museum that had, just previously, played host to a mammoth review of the art of Modernism's most widely acknowledged — certainly Modernism's most controversial — leader: Pablo Picasso. It was but natural to muse: What did the public, which thronged both events, make of the striking contrast presented, the apparently sharp cleavage between new and old? The intrepid museum, recognizing both the urgency and the legitimacy of such interrogation, offered this pertinent statement:

"Imaginary contests between the heroes of antiquity and their modern counterparts have always had a certain fascination. Here some such trial of strength may actually take place, for the museum, believing in the power and quality of the modern artist, has not hesitated to accept the challenge made possible by its act of hospitality toward the Italian masters. Whichever side, the old or the new, seems to triumph, one fact is sure: the great indebtedness of the modern masters to the work of their ancestors of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque — a debt that is continually being paid not only by the explicit homage which modern artists so often offer to the past, but by the ever-changing illumination which the art of the living throws upon the art of the dead."

The moment was, as I have said, in its way climactic. Yet it seemed to me to involve less a "contest" than, thinking in cool terms, a valuable opportunity to compare and to reconcile, on a historical and philosophical and esthetic basis, the contrasting art idioms of two widely disparate ages. At any rate, approach it how we would, the issue that then confronted us we could not, were we to be quite honest



FIG. 3. — Picasso. — Woman with a Crow. — Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio.



FIG. 4. — XII Century. — Trumeau Prophet at St. Pierre, Moissac, France.

“rose” and “harlequinade;” of research based on African Negro art or on that of Catalonia, as the case might be; a panoply that embraced also Cubism, phase by phase (“analytical” and “synthetic”); the massive, simplified, sculptural forms of Picasso’s “classical” exploit; then abstractions, increasingly difficult to classify; abstractions fantastic, grotesque, severely geometrical, paleolithic (the “bone” period), flatly linear again, abstractions in simple pattern or elaborate arabesque, painted, or expressed in terms of three-dimensional montage of plaster and sand, of string and cloth and nails. Finally those ferocious distortions: the huge *Guernica* mural and the recent series of two-faced monsters, conceivably related to Surrealism, with their bafflingly innocent titles, the most extraordinary of these documents in paint being

with ourselves, evade. Without failing to take into account all that might seem sharply divergent here, we must, were we able to do so, discover elements common to both, to new and to old alike.

Upon the one hand we were confronted with the visual argument of “time-tested” greatness: a spectacle made up, in part, of paintings by such Renaissance masters as Raphael, Botticelli, Fra Angelico, Titian; sculpture by Michelangelo, Verrocchio, Andrea della Robbia, Donatello — to name but these. Upon the other hand we had, so short a time before, been confronted with a survey of the “periods” to which it has become our custom to assign Picasso’s art of the last four decades. We had seen outspread a lavish panoply of “blue” and



FIG. 5. — Giorgione. — Judith. — Hermitage, Leningrad.



a 1938 "Girl with a Cock." The late products of Picasso's brush are indeed so extraordinary that only a few enthusiasts have ventured to "interpret" them. And I believe they have never been, as we say, "described."

Now it would hardly be fair, for our present purpose, to ask Picasso alone to represent XX Century Modernism, versatile and volatile and typical though he is. If I have seemed, in the foregoing, to give to a single individual exaggerated prominence, considering the general nature of our investigation, it is only because the juxtaposition afforded by the Museum of Modern Art was so evocative as to provide, now in retrospect, a sort of springboard. From this point forward let it be the modern movement as a whole that is kept in mind, as we search for significant causes and, on the historical side, for significant relationships and even possible parallels.

XX Century Modernism has become a kind of palimpsest, a kaleidoscope of multiple facets; and we are still too close to behold it all in the simplifying perspective that makes so much easier for us an evaluation of the art currents of a more distant past. The modern phases come catapulting not as "single spies but in battalions": Fauvism, Cubism, Futurism, Constructivism, Purism, Orphism, Synchronism, Suprematism, Neo-Plasticism, Dadaism, Surrealism, and Neo-Platonism — which may be designated as another name for the non-objective, if we recall the much-quoted passage in Plato's *Philebus*:

"I will try to speak of the beauty of shapes, and I do not mean the shapes of living figures, or their imitations in paintings, but I mean straight lines and curves and the shapes made from them, flat or solid, by the lathe, ruler and square."

This is not the place in which to pick the complex modern kaleidoscope apart and analyze, insofar as one might feel equipped to do so, the many divergent or interlocking segments. Instead we must now deal with a panorama broad and generalized. And the fundamental present interrogation must be: Those artists, pio-



FIG. 6. — Picasso. — Woman in an Armchair. — Collection of the Artist.

neering in this "revolution" that has surged through the decades of our century to date, did they, altogether, fly off at mad, indefensible tangents, or do they seem instead to have acted with an instinctive logic and, however inscrutably at the time, to have striven not alone to express ideas peculiarly theirs, but also to reflect the interior life of the world society to which they belonged and that had helped mold their thought? If Modern Art cannot be given an entirely clean bill of health, ought we not at any rate to concede that every major development along the way has been in a sense inevitable and therefore justified? Answering these and similar queries in the affirmative, as I for one am prepared to do, we should then perceive the art of our own time to be not an isolated phenomenon, but instead just another link in the long historical sequence.



FIG. 7. — Roman Copy of a Greek Statue Attributed to Polykleitos. — Amazon. — Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

In checking up on this we shall have to glance at some of the great cultures of the past (meanwhile keeping one eye always on the present) in an effort to decide whether they likewise are basically expressive of the society in the midst of which they flourished, as well as basically equipped to merge in the eternal stream of art that began with man's first artistic endeavor and that will flow on through an indeterminate future. It should also, as we proceed, be possible to detect recurrences with respect to "techniques" or categories, all of which would then be recognized as contributory to the forming and the continuance of traditions — "mobile in a changing world."

Some one has tersely and sweepingly summed up certain of the ancient cultures thus: "Palaeolithic man evolved his art from a desire to have control over the forces of nature; the Asiatic from a desire to display his control over his fellow men; the Egyptian from a desire to secure a dwelling place for his spirit after death; and the Greek from a desire to secure the earthly presence of his gods." All of these motiva-





FIG. 8. — Michelangelo. — Figure on the Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, St. Peter Basilica, Rome.

where we will, fail to encounter in

Modern Art persistent employment of

plastic symbol language, be the exact

mode what it may.

And what applies to Egypt applies

likewise to ancient Greece of the so-

called archaic period — a period em-

bracing, roughly, the VII and VI Cen-

turies B.C. Here stylization, though in

many respects of a different sort, is met

with, again transforming nature to suit

the ideals and the needs of the develop-

ing Greek culture. There is something

wonderfully haunting and beautiful

about the Greek archaic period—even

though it may be held that the famous

tions were rooted, and found sustenance, in various social types, so to speak.

The great Egyptian civilization, considered as a national entity, lasted, in large part as an unbroken sequence, over a period of thousands of years. And through it all ran a sovereign technique of stylization or formalization. Something very close to naturalism might at times emerge, but the characteristic expression of Egyptian art transforms nature into forms that are more or less rigidly at variance with those of nature itself—*au fond* the same process that has been so characteristic of the art of our own century. Stylization in Egypt meant the ritualistic creation of symbols; and while stylization paralleling this constitutes only one facet of Modernism's complex expression, we cannot, turn



FIG. 9. — Picasso. — The Pipes of Pan; 1923. — Museum of Modern Art, New York.

"archaic smile" (again a symbol) is to the serene "universal" expression of the subsequent Age of Pericles what the Middle Ages in Europe were to the full golden splendor of the Renaissance. Yet even the art of V Century Greece, which for many represents the high-water mark of Greek culture, even there, though stylization has been abandoned for a more direct approach to natural forms, those forms are idealistically rather than, in the strict sense, realistically wrought. The fundamental approach was abstract, just as was the approach of the Egyptian artist, just as was that of the Orient. And, fundamentally, everything created, whatever the mode involved, helped draw into a synthesis what we ourselves now like to term "a way of life."

The Romans too had a way of life, and they expressed it in their art: an art in large measure beholden, eclectic, yet one that, as expressed in the realm of engineering (let us say, rather, in a brilliant collaboration of engineer and architect), could not be rivalled on so immense a scale until our own scientific age, the age of the machine. Here once more, in this acknowledged "rivalry," we detect a recurrence of that ever pristine spirit of renewal, to which Professor Focillon alludes in one of the passages earlier quoted.

"History," observes John Buchan in his excellent recent book on Augustus, "does not repeat itself except with variations, but we can trace a resemblance between the conditions of his [Augustus's] time and those of today. Once again the crust of civilization has worn thin, and beneath can be heard the muttering of primeval fires. Once again many accepted principles of government have been overthrown and the world has become a laboratory where immature and feverish minds experiment with unknown forces. Once again problems cannot be comfortably limited, for science has brought the nations into an uneasy bondage to each other. In the actual business of administration, there is no question of today that Augustus had not to face and answer."

After the fall of the Roman Empire, slowly the pack was reshuffled, during those seemingly endless centuries preceding the emergence of the Renaissance. It used to be fashionable to speak of the Middle Ages as, embracively, the Dark Ages. The long period that followed the disintegration of Rome as a supreme world power was indeed one of enormous struggle, but it was also a time of loftiest spiritual and intellectual growth. A period that for all its confusion and groping and turmoil could produce the Byzantine, the Romanesque, the Gothic styles, the monastic orders, the Crusades, the illuminated manuscripts, Plotinus, St. Thomas Aquinas, Boccaccio, Dante, does not deserve to be called "benighted." However, we cannot here go into all this. What is pertinent to our purpose is to detect, if we can, what may be deemed quintessential in the creative utterance of that time.

This vision then, made articulate, was impregnated with religious mysticism.



The typical artist of the Middle Ages—though he, like the artist of the as yet unborn Renaissance, knew much about “realities” inherent in the natural world—took up his mighty task in a spirit of mystical exaltation: a strain such as, long afterward, would isolatedly reappear in El Greco. Rabelaisian the Medieval artist could be. He could enjoy his half-savage jest, slipping rowdy caricature into the niche beside the saint upon a cathedral’s façade. Yet essentially it was in a mood of religious mysticism that he expressed himself and his time. Human form and nature’s landscape were called into play not because (in Renaissance terms) they suggested the highest conceivable beauty, but rather because through them—distorting freely, sometimes all but effacing—the Medieval artist might cause the light of Heaven to shine, or fires of Hell beat with unexampled fierceness of admonition. Though, as in the other cultures we have touched upon, actual forms were not renounced, all this was abstract, surely, in the “essence” sense of the term. It was abstraction addressed to the prevalent arcana of a world mystically ordered. If you prefer, it was “expressionism,” curiously akin to the quite otherwise motivated expressionism of our own modern age.

By way of contrast the art of the High Renaissance reveals itself, in its awakened “tiptoe” mood, as an art, par excellence, of idealized rather than savagely and mystically distorted naturalism; an art that had stepped from rich medieval twilight into the full radiance of the sun. As we stand before paintings by Raphael, or Correggio, or Giorgione, or Titian, we feel ourselves in contact with artists who—each in his own way and as deeply as his nature would permit—were representative of an epoch that with avidity responded to “realities” implicit in a world of warm living flesh and blood. Yet we must not overlook the transforming idealization that, as in V Century Greek art, schooled conglomerate nature into types or symbols. Here again we find ourselves at grips with the hydra-headed problem of abstraction, which looms so large in the panorama of Modernism. One salient difference, as we juxtapose the abstract symbol-language of the Renaissance and that of the XX Century, is that, whereas the Renaissance artist idealized on the basis of apparent strict fidelity to outward form, the exponent of Modernism, often brushing representation aside, has all along seemed (his desire cloaked in various guises) to have been in quest of abstract elements within or behind outward form.

It is in a world transformed by science in which we of today live and create and strive to evaluate what is created. Science, mobilizing nature’s forces, irradiates the sphere of our common daily experience. Acquiescent, we essay to take it all in our stride. Or, marveling, and with sudden pause, we ask: What are the modern scientists doing to our universe? They turn out new hypothetical universes every day. It might indeed be felt that there are now as many universes as there are thinkers. Well, this is perhaps beside the point; and yet there may seem a basic

relevance, too, when we stop to realize that science deals, uninterruptedly, with abstractions; with forces it can touch and harness, yet forces that must in the final analysis elude; forces sensed but not really understood.

Is it to be wondered at, then, that art should reflect, in diverse ways, a pattern of life so enveloping? The very tempo of modern life, contrasting with that of the past, seems bound to have its effect when artists seek creatively to express the age that is theirs, and do not detachedly sit and meditate in some academic dream of bygone experience. The pace today is frenetic, and the artist, racing with his age, calls in stenography. He hits upon a plastic shorthand code that may get him there in time. And if this shorthand of his often appears, instead, to be a short circuit, that need not seem strange in a world so full of confused currents, a world so daringly or brashly experimental; a world so fallible. . . .

The characteristic art of any age should, I think, be deemed—like everything else in life—a relative matter; relative with respect to what has preceded, what is, and what follows, in a given culture; relative likewise to the total, the eternally enlarging, span of mankind's cultural experience. There will always be discernible a chain of causes, a fabric of inevitability, upon which each age paints, so to speak, its autobiographical picture.

Rabindranath Tagore once said that "art represents the inexhaustible magnificence of the creative spirit." He called it "generous in its acceptance and generous in its bestowal," and bade us remember that always, in the rhythm of change, "its vision is new, though its view may be old." Among the qualities that have distinguished the attitude of the modern artist are revolt, aloofness, cynicism, sardonic humor, perversity, disillusion, despair. And all of these have come straight out of the soil of our XX Century culture. If there is something terrible and even sometimes frightening in Modern Art, the roots of this dark passion draw sustenance from deep places in the social soul, as do likewise the roots of wisdom and goodness and beauty.

The present is ever irradiated with the past. Those who would repudiate Modern Art, deploring it because—of all things—it hasn't been something *else*, might just as well, on the historical count, decide to repudiate Napoleon and Alexander the Great. Such repudiation strikes me, whenever I encounter it, as being about as reasonable as the request of a lady whom the astronomer Cassini had invited to see an eclipse of the moon. Bergson cites it in his essay, *Laughter*. Arriving too late, the lady said: "Monsieur de Cassini, I know, will have the goodness to begin all over again, to please me."



# WESTERN ICONOGRAPHIC THEMES IN ARMENIAN MANUSCRIPTS



FIG. 1. — Bible of 1318 A.D. — First page of the Book of Genesis.  
— Etchmiadzin, N° 182/206, fol. 4.

THE representations of Old and New Testament scenes in Armenian manuscripts are based on Byzantine iconography; in many instances the early Syrian formulae are retained, in others the Constantinopolitan types are followed. It is interesting, therefore, to note the few compositions which have been influenced by the art of western Europe. Two of the examples to be discussed occur in a Bible written in 1318 for Esayi Ntchetsi, the abbot of the monastery of Gladsor, the intellectual center of the province of Siunik', in north-eastern Armenia (Etchmiadzin N° 182/206).<sup>1</sup> The manuscript was il-

1. GAREGIN HOVSEPI'IAN, *Album of Paleography*, Vagharshapat, 1913, p. 45, pl. 79, fig. 124; A. TCHOBANIAN, *Armenian pages*, Paris, 1912, figs. 34-38; A. TCHOBANIAN, *La Roseaie d'Arménie*, Paris, 1918-1929, vol. I, pp. 6, 100; vol. III, pp. 246, 265. S. DER NERSESIAN, *Manuscrits Arméniens Illustrés des XIIe, XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, Paris, 1936, p. 110.

illustrated by T'oros of Taron, the foremost artist of Greater Armenia in the XIV Century.<sup>2</sup> The third example appears first in a Gospel illuminated by T'oros of Taron in 1307 (Hartford Theological Seminary N° 3), and it is repeated by the same miniaturist in two other manuscripts.

The initial I of the Book of Genesis is formed by a narrow band, decorated with seven compositions, figuring the days of Creation, enclosed in oval frames (Fig. 1). In the first two medallions Christ as Creator is slightly turned to the right and holds a globe in his left hand; in the next two, turned slightly to the left, he raises his hand in command; in the fifth and sixth medallions he again faces to the right; and in the last he is enthroned and blessing. A beardless figure writing under divine inspiration, indicated by the Hand of God emerging from the arc of heaven, fills the loop of the initial. This figure, which repeats the well-known Evangelist type, is Moses, also represented in other Armenian manuscripts in the act of writing the Book of Genesis, and usually figured in Armenian art as a young, beardless man.<sup>3</sup>

The title-head, the ornate letters of the text, and the marginal ornament are typical of Armenian art of the XIV Century, as seen in other manuscripts illustrated by T'oros of Taron and his contemporaries; only the initial introduces a new feature both through its decorative scheme and the iconography of the small scenes.

Armenian letters formed by a vertical band have geometric or formalized floral ornaments. Whenever human or animal figures are used—such as the zoomorphic letters seen on this page, or the Gospel initials composed of the Evangelist symbols—the forms are contorted to follow the shape of the letters.<sup>4</sup> In rare instances small scenes are combined with the initials, but they are never enclosed in a medallion as they are in this case. For example, in a XIII Century Gospel of the Freer Gallery in Washington (no. 32.18, fol. 539), angels are ascending the ladder which forms the initial I, while Jacob lies asleep at the foot.

We have no comparative material for the Creation scenes, for very few illustrated Armenian Bibles prior to the XIV Century have survived, but Byzantine models must have been followed for these as for all other religious themes. In Byzantine art, except for the early example of the Cotton Genesis and its later copy in the mosaics of the narthex of San Marco, the Creator as

2. For the work of T'oros of Taron and the importance of the monastery of Gladsor see S. Der Nersessian, *Op. cit.*, pp. 5-6, 110-136.

3. Moses writing the Book of Genesis decorates the initial of a Bible in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, no. 1925, written in A. D. 1269. The bearded type of Moses becomes more common in the XIV Century and has occasionally been used by T'oros of Taron, but in this manuscript he has retained the early type both in this portrait and in the standing figure in the frontispiece (TCHOBANIAN, *Armenian Pages*, fig. 38).

4. S. DER NERSESSIAN, *Op. cit.*, pls. XIV-XV, XXII-XXIII, XXXVII, LX-LXIII, LXXVII, LXIX, LXXXI, LXXXIII, LXXXV-XCVI, CII.



Christ never appears.<sup>5</sup> In his place we have the Hand of God, or a ray emerging from the arc of heaven.

The initial of the Etchmiadzin Bible no. 182/206, though differing from other Armenian and Byzantine examples, is a well-known type in western art, beginning with the late XII Century. Not only is it a common practise to fill the vertical band with figures and small scenes framed by quatrefoils, circles, ovals or lozenges, but the initial I of the Book of Genesis is frequently decorated with the Creation scenes. In most examples Christ the Creator, holding the globe, is turned sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left. In the fifth scene he often holds a bird or a fish in his hand; in the sixth he bends towards Eve, emerging from Adam's side; and he is always enthroned and blessing in the last medallion.<sup>6</sup> French manuscripts of the late XII or XIII Century offer the closest parallels to the Armenian miniature. The oval frame, instead of the more usual roundels or quatrefoils, may be seen in two Bibles of the Parisian school, one in the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève in Paris, the other in the Royal Library at Stuttgart. The same forms and iconography appear in a fragmentary Bible formerly in the Stroganov Collection in Rome, and belonging now to Mr. Philip Hofer of Cambridge, Mass. (Fig. 2).<sup>7</sup>

There can be no doubt that T'oros of Taron followed such a model, adding to it the portrait of Moses writing, in order to fill the loop of the Armenian letter I, and omitting the Crucifixion painted at the base of the initial in most Latin manuscripts.

The second miniature, which does not belong to Armenian art, is the *Tree of Jesse* painted at the beginning of the Book of Psalms in the Etchmiadzin Bible (Fig. 3). In the lower left corner of the page Jesse is half recumbent on a couch, his head resting on his right hand as he gazes towards the tree which rises from his breast. This tree is formed by thin, undulating branches, with pointed, lancet-like leaves. On the main stem, below the first bifurcation, appears the nimbed head of a bearded king who is assuredly David, judging from the iconographic type and the place assigned to him. At the top of the tree, Christ, enthroned in a mandorla, holds the book of the Gospels and blesses. Three small, nimbed figures are seated cross-legged, in oriental fashion, on each of the lower lateral branches, holding in their hands open scrolls which bear no inscriptions;

5. J. J. TIKKANEN, *Die Genesismosaiken von S. Marco in Venedig*, Helsingfors 1889.

6. The reproduction given by TCHOBANIAN (*Armenian Pages*, fig. 34; *Roseraie d'Arménie*, III, 246), the only photographic material available at present, is very indistinct. In the lower half of the fifth medallion there are some lines which probably indicate water as in the Latin manuscripts; in the sixth medallion the figures on the right seem to be Adam, and Eve emerging from his side.

7. AMÉDÉE BOINET, *Les Manuscrits à Peintures de la Bibliothèque Sainte Geneviève de Paris*, Paris 1921, pl. XVII; G. VITZTHUM, *Die Pariser Miniaturmalerei*, Leipzig, 1907, pl. XXII. For a XIV Century French example with oval medallions see: R. EISLER, *Die illuminierten Handschriften in Kärnten*, in: "Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der illuminierten Handschriften in Österreich," vol. III, pl. IIc-e. I wish to express my special thanks to Mr. Philip Hofer for allowing me to reproduce a page of his manuscript.

the nimbed heads of six other men may be seen behind each group, making eighteen figures in all. Three other prophets are seated on the upper left branch, and three kings on the upper right branch, all of them holding open scrolls. The anointing of David fills the lower right corner of the page: Samuel stands full-face, and David is kneeling at his side.

The Tree of Jesse, of which this is the first Armenian example, appears rather late in East Christian art. The lost mosaic of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem executed in 1169, during the reign of Amaury of Jerusalem, does not belong to Byzantine art.<sup>8</sup> The earliest known examples are therefore the Serbian paintings of Arilje (about 1300) and Decani (1327-1348), and the Bulgarian paintings of the church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul at Tirnovo, built in the second half of the XIV Century.<sup>9</sup> In the Byzantine empire proper the Tree of Jesse began to be represented after the XIV Century, and it is included in the *Painter's Guide* among the subjects used for the decoration of churches.<sup>10</sup>

The elaborate compositions of the Balkan churches, only one of which antedates our example, have hardly any connection with our miniature; the model must again be sought for in western Europe, where the Tree of Jesse had frequently been represented since the middle of the XII Century.<sup>11</sup>

The iconography of the Armenian miniature differs in several respects from the usual type. The genealogical stem passes directly from David to Christ, thus omitting the Virgin who, in most representations, is the principal figure and even, in some cases, the only one. In Latin literature the *Virga Jesse* is usually taken to mean the Virgin, and this interpretation has been followed by the western artists. But, according to several early writers, the *Virga Jesse* may mean Christ. It is interesting to recall that this explanation was given by St. Cyril of Alexandria whose works have been translated into Armenian.<sup>12</sup>

Our miniature is unique in its representation of David, for the artist has only painted his head, instead of the entire figure or the bust. He may have intended to give thus greater prominence to Christ, and show an immediate connection between him and Jesse. In this respect alone the composition can be compared to the relief on the bronze doors of S. Zeno in Verona, where Christ blessing is seated at the bifurcation of the main stem, directly above Jesse.<sup>13</sup>

Another difference between our composition and the current types appears in the placing of the secondary figures. In western art, the kings who are not

8. M. DE VOGÜÉ, *Les Eglises de la Terre Sainte*, Paris, 1860, pp. 64-70; CH. DIEHL, *Manuel d'Art Byzantin*, Paris, 1926, vol. II, p. 562.

9. V. R. PETKOVIČ, *La Peinture Serbe du Moyen Age*, Belgrade, 1930, pls. 28b and 94; A. GRABAR, *La Peinture Religieuse en Bulgarie*, Paris, 1928, p. 278 and pls. XLVIII-XLIX.

10. A. PAPADOPOULOS-KÉRAMEUS, 'Ερμηνεία τῆς Ζωγραφικῆς τέχνης, St. Petersburg 1909, p. 84.

11. ARTHUR WATSON, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*, London, 1934.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 5-6; MIGNE, *Patrologia Graeca*, LXX, 309 D.

13. A. BOECKLER, *Die Bronzetür von San Zeno*, Marburg, 1931, pl. 73; A. WATSON, *Op. cit.*, pl. IX.



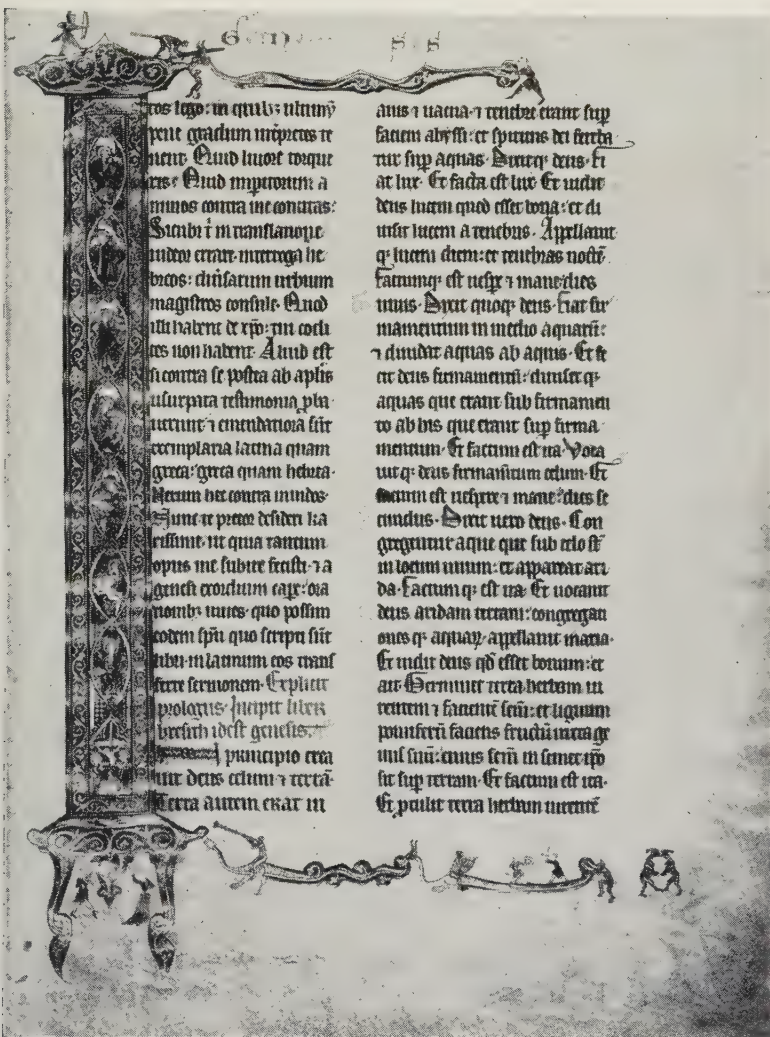


FIG. 2. — First page of the Book of Genesis. — Bible in the Philip Hofer Collection, Cambridge, Mass.

included in the direct genealogical stem sometimes stand at the sides of the tree; in other instances they sit on the side branches, or appear in the circumvolutions of these branches; but they are never grouped on one branch, as they are here. The prophets are usually represented singly, occasionally in pairs, at the sides of the tree or in the scrolls of the branches. Even when they form compact groups, as in the *Hortus Deliciarum* of the Abbess Herrad von Landsberg, they are not seated in a row on the lateral branches, as in the Armenian manuscript, but appear in the circumvolutions of the branches.<sup>14</sup>

While deriving his inspiration from some Latin example, T'oros of

Taron has not followed his model as faithfully as he had in the preceding composition, and the eastern character is particularly apparent in the cross-legged, seated position of the prophets. He may also have departed from his model by adding the Anointing of David, and thus abandoning the usual symmetrical scheme.<sup>15</sup> When the Tree of Jesse serves as a frontispiece to the Psalms in Latin manuscripts, David is sometimes represented singing the Psalms, or episodes

14. A. STRAUB AND G. KELLER, *Herrade de Landsberg. Hortus Deliciarum*, Strassburg, 1901, p. XXV bis; A. WATSON, *Op. cit.*, p. XXXII.

15. The symmetry is disturbed only when the Tree of Jesse is painted in the initial L or E; the tree then fills the vertical band while Jesse is recumbent in the horizontal band of the letter. See, for instance: *Schools of Illumination. Reproductions from Manuscripts in the British Museum*, Part V, pl. 10; G. SWARZENSKI AND R. SCHILLING, *Die illuminierten Handschriften und Einzelminiaturen des Mittelalters und der Renaissance in Frankfurter Besitz*, Frankfurt, 1929, pl. XXVI (40).

from his youth are added to the composition,<sup>16</sup> but never, to my knowledge, his anointment. However, T'oros of Taron probably copied this scene from a western model, for it differs from Byzantine representations in several respects. In the latter, David is usually shown as a young shepherd boy, clad in a short tunic, and standing before Samuel with head slightly bent.<sup>17</sup> Occasionally the kingship of David is recalled in his costume. A miniature of the London Psalter of the year 1066 (fol. 97vo) suggests a coronation scene: David clothed as a Byzantine emperor, with the richly embroidered band, the *loros*, over his tunic and a crown on his head, stands in a rigid, frontal attitude on a cushioned footstool. The humble, kneeling position of the Armenian miniature, unknown in Byzantine art, appears in a number of Latin manuscripts. In all these examples David wears a long tunic, though not the chlamys.<sup>18</sup> The phial held by Samuel also recalls western usage<sup>19</sup> and differs from the Byzantine anointing horn.

The costume of Samuel in this scene, namely the tunic, the ephod and the tiara of the high priest as described in *Exodus*, chapter XXVIII, is peculiar to the Armenian manuscript. The enlarged headdress looks like a turban, and this same type has been used in the frontispiece of this manuscript, where Aaron stands by the side of Moses.<sup>20</sup> Byzantine artists usually represent Samuel clothed like the prophets; even when his office of high priest is suggested by the headdress, as in the Hamilton Psalter in Berlin (fol. 166), the rest of the costume is not changed. In Latin manuscripts he sometimes wears a large mantle and a pointed hat, or a crown.<sup>21</sup>

The third composition which suggests western influence is the image of the *Virgin and Child* painted on the first page of a Gospel now at the Hartford Theological Seminary No. 3 (Fig. 4), one of the earliest works of T'oros of Taron. The manuscript was written in 1307 at the monastery of Noravank', near Gladsor, for Ivané Orbelian, a member of the ruling family of the province of Siunik'. Ivané's name appears in the colophon and on the seals painted in the title-head. At the center of this title-head the Virgin, enthroned under an orna-

16. *Schools of Illumination. Reproductions from Manuscripts in the British Museum*, part II, pl. 13. Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Exhibition of Illuminated Manuscripts*, London, 1908, pl. 47, fig. 50; pl. 59, fig. 67.

17. H. OMONT, *Miniatures des plus Anciens Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, 1929, pl. III, XXXVII. *Le Miniature della Bibbia Cod. Vat. Reg. Gr. 1 e del Salterio Cod. Pal. Gr. 381* (Collezione Paleografica Vaticana I), pl. 12; H. BUCHTHAL, *The Miniatures of the Paris Psalter*, London, 1938, figs. 3, 26, 27, 71, 75.

18. H. MARTIN, *La Miniature Française*, Paris, 1923, pl. 18 (XXII); S. C. COCKERELL AND M. R. JAMES, *Two East Anglian Psalters at the Bodleian Library*, Oxford, 1926, pl. Ormesby VI; H. SWARZENSKI, *Die lateinischen illuminierten Handschriften des XIII. Jahrhunderts . . .*, Berlin, 1936, pl. 171 (939) and 200 (1071). In an Antiphonal from Salzburg David has both the long tunic and chlamys but he stands erect: K. LIND, *Antiphonarium*, pl. XLIV.

19. H. SWARZENSKI, *Lateinische Handschriften*, pl. 200 (1071); S. C. COCKERELL, *A Book of Old Testament Illustrations*, Cambridge, 1927, fol. 26a; "Walpole Society Annual," III (1913-14), pl. L.

20. A. TCHOBANIAN, *Armenian Pages*, fig. 38.

21. COCKERELL AND JAMES, *Op. cit.*, pl. ORMESBY VI. M. MARTIN, *Op. cit.*, pl. 18 (XXII); D. EGBERT, *The Tickhill Psalter and Related Manuscripts*, New York-Princeton, 1940, pl. CIIIa.





FIG. 3. — Bible of 1318 A.D. — The Tree of Jesse. — Etchmiadzin, N°182/206, fol.259.

mental arch, presents her breast to the infant Jesus seated on her right knee. A jewelled crown is placed over her embroidered veil which hangs down on the left side, and is brought over her knees on the right side, covering the greater part of her tunic. The Christ-child is a boy about two years old; he raises the right hand and holds a scroll in the left hand. Above the title-head, two archangels stand guard: on the left, Michael, holding a chalice and a sword; on the right, Gabriel, holding a chalice and a lance. They both wear the Byzantine imperial costume with the embroidered *loros*.

This miniature should be compared to western examples because of the Virgin's costume, for this kind of veil and especially the crown are never used in East Christian art but are common in western Europe.<sup>22</sup> The title-head of the Gospel of Saint Luke in this same manuscript, with the representation of the

*Virgin of Tenderness* (Fig. 5), which follows the well-known type of the *Vladimir Virgin*, presents an interesting contrast between western and Byzantine types.<sup>23</sup>

The iconographic theme of the nursing Madonna originated in the East. The earliest examples may be seen in Coptic art, in the paintings of Bawit and Saqqara, on sculptured stelae and, later, in illuminated manuscripts.<sup>24</sup> Byzantine examples, ranging from the VII to the XIV Century, bear evidence to the fact that this type, though not one of the most popular, was never entirely forgotten; it continued to be represented after the XIV Century in the art of the Balkan

22. MARION LAWRENCE, *Maria Regina* in: "The Art Bulletin," VII (1925), pp. 150-164.

23. A. ANISIMOV, *Our Lady of Vladimir*, Prague, 1928.

24. E. DRIOTON, *Fouilles Exécutées à Baouit par Jean Maspero*, in: "Mémoires de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale," LIX (1943), pl. XLIII; J. E. QUIBELL, *Excavations at Saqqara*, Cairo, 1908, pls. XL-XLI; 1912, pl. XXII; N. KONDAKOV, *Ikongrafia Bogomateri*, St. Petersburg, 1914, vol. I, pp. 256-7, figs. 159-160; W. DE GRÜNEISEN, *Les Caractéristiques de l'Art Copte*, Florence, 1922, p. 101 and pl. XLV; B. DA COSTA GREENE AND M. HARRSEN, *The Pierpont Morgan Library. Exhibition of Illuminated Manuscripts*, New York, 1934, pls. I, II. *Königliches Museum zu Berlin. Beschreibung der Bildwerke der christlichen Epochen*, Berlin, 1909, vol. III, 1, p. 36, no. 79.

countries and especially that of Russia.<sup>25</sup> In all these works, however, the Virgin wears the Syrian *maphorion* and so, while the type itself belongs to the Byzantine world, the immediate model of our manuscript must have come from western Europe.

The *Virgo lactans* is mentioned in the Latin literature of the VIII Century. In a letter written to the Byzantine emperor Leo III, about the year 727, Pope Gregory II mentions among the subjects represented in the churches, the image of the Virgin nursing the Child: "*Dominum Deumque nostrum lactentem in ulnis habentis, angelosque circumstantes ac ter sanctum hymnum canentes.*"<sup>26</sup> The earliest examples clearly show the eastern derivation of this type. In a miniature of the *Légendaire de Cîteaux*, painted in the late XI or early XII Century, the *Virgo lactans*, seated in a hieratic attitude, is draped in the *maphorion*, and the accompanying inscription designates her by her Greek title of *Theotokos*.<sup>27</sup> This veiled type is used in all XII Century works, and in the majority of XIII Century examples; it survived in the Italian art of the following centuries.<sup>28</sup> But the Gothic artists of the XIII Century modified the old Byzantine form and the Virgin, the queen of heavens, appears crowned even in this intimate scene. Two stained glass windows of Chartres are among the earliest examples: the Virgin, standing, holds the infant Jesus on one arm and with her free hand offers her bared breast to him.<sup>29</sup> The suckling is here only suggested, but in an English Psalter written shortly after 1262<sup>30</sup> the Child has taken hold of his mother's breast with both hands (Fig. 6); we see the same thing in a manuscript in the Wellesley College Library, containing the *De Laudibus Beatae Virginis* of Albertus Magnus, which was probably illuminated in France in the first years of the XIV Century (Fig. 7).<sup>31</sup>

These examples show that the crowned *Virgo Lactans*, of which we find numerous examples in French and English art of the XIV Century, had been devised in the XIII Century, and that it was possible for an artist working in

25. See examples listed by G. MILLET, *Recherches sur l'Iconographie de l'Evangile*. . . . Paris, 1916, pp. 627-9; TH. WIEGAND, *Milet*, vol. III.1 *Der Latmos*, Berlin, 1903, pp. 197-200; A. GRABAR, *La Peinture Religieuse en Bulgarie*, Paris, 1928, pp. 105-6; V. LAZAREV, *Early Italo-Byzantine Painting in Italy*, in: "The Burlington Magazine," LXIII (1933), p. 280; N. KONDAKOV, *Ikongrafia Bogomateri*, St. Petersburg, 1910, pp. 34-43; KONDAKOV's theory that the Russian examples are derived from the Italian is no longer valid.

26. MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina*, LXXXIX, 516C.

27. C. OURSEL, *Les Manuscrits à Miniatures de la Bibliothèque de Dijon*, Paris, 1923, pl. IIIa and p. 14.

28. This is particularly true in the type known as the *Madonna of Humility*: MILLARD MEISS, *The Madonna of Humility*, in: "The Art Bulletin," XVIII (1936), pp. 435-464.

29. Y. DELAPORTE, *Les Vitraux de la Cathédrale de Chartres*, Chartres, 1926, vol. I, pls. XLIII, CLXXXVI.

30. New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 756, fol. 10 v. I wish to thank Miss Belle da Costa Greene for allowing me to reproduce this miniature, and Miss Meta Harrsen for information concerning the date.

31. The miniature is painted in the initial M of the sixth chapter: *De appellationibus Beatae Mariae*. Miss Dorothy Miner called my attention to the close stylistic connection between this manuscript and a Liturgical Psalter in the Walters Art Gallery, no. 115, which has generally been assigned to Arras and dated about the years 1307-1310. In her opinion the Wellesley manuscript might be slightly earlier. The short veil of the Virgin and the shape of the crown in this and other Gothic manuscripts differ from those of the Armenian miniature.



the year 1307 to have used such a model. The infant Jesus of the Armenian miniature, who is sitting erect and does not take hold of his mother's breast, follows the old Coptic and Byzantine types, but this attitude is sometimes retained in western works of the XIII Century. We find it, for instance, on a Catalanian altar front of the late XIII Century in the Bosch Collection at Barcelona.<sup>32</sup> As for the two archangels on the sides, they are entirely in the Byzantine tradition.

T'oros of Taron repeated the crowned *Virgo Lactans* in two other manuscripts: in a Gospel written in 1321, now at the British Museum, Add. 15411; and in the Etchmiadzin Gospel no. 6289, written in 1323 for Esayi Ntchetsi, the abbot of Gladsor.<sup>33</sup> The entire composition, the crowned, nursing Virgin and the archangels on the sides, was copied in 1475 by the scribe Abraham who remained faithful to the artistic tradition of the school of Gladsor.<sup>34</sup> But the initial with the Creation scenes was never again represented, to my knowledge, either by T'oros himself or by other Armenian artists, and a late example of the Tree of Jesse follows a different type which has no connection with the miniature of the Etchmiadzin Bible.<sup>35</sup>

It is difficult to determine with any certainty the exact provenance of the models imitated by T'oros of Taron, for he has considerably modified the iconography and has not been affected by the style of his prototypes. The initial of the Book of Genesis, which follows the Latin compositions more faithfully than either one of the other two scenes, has its closest parallels in French manuscripts. The Tree of Jesse and the nursing Virgin are also frequently represented in French art, so that we can tentatively suggest that T'oros of Taron found his models in a French illuminated manuscript.

In order to show how an artist working in this remote province of Armenia could have seen and imitated western works of art, we shall have to consider, in some detail, the historical circumstances and, in particular, the relations between East and West during the second half of the XIII Century and the early XIV Century.

The people of Greater Armenia had comparatively few contacts with the Crusader states of Syria and Palestine, or with the Catholic orders established in the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia; they became acquainted with western civilization through other channels, namely the religious missions sent to the East. The

32. WALTER W. S. COOK, *Early Spanish Panel Painting in the Plandiura Collection*, in: "The Art Bulletin" XI (1929), p. 169, fig. II.

33. S. DER NERSESSIAN, *Op. cit.*, pp. III, 133-4.

34. ARCHBISHOP GAREGIN HOVSEPIAN, *Khaghbakians or Proshians*, Vagharshapat, 1928, pp. 232-4, fig. 102.

35. Vatican, Codex Borgianus Armenus, No. 25. Gospel of the year 1636-7. The composition is not described in the catalogue, but the inscription which accompanies the miniature suggests an entirely different composition from ours; it reads: "The Patriarch Jacob and his twelve sons and Mary, from his tribe, bearing the Lord," see: E. TISSERANT, *Codices Armeni Bibliothecae Vaticanae*, Rome, 1927, p. 186.



FIG. 4. — Gospel of 1307 A.D. — First page of the Gospel of St. Matthew. — Theological Seminary, Hartford, Conn., Arm.MS.3.

Mongol invasion of Hungary had filled Europe with alarm and distress, but even the full realization of the impending danger was not sufficient to put an end to the conflicts between the European powers. Unable to organize a concerted military action, Pope Innocent IV resorted to spiritual means, encouraging and initiating religious missions, with the hope that, once converted, the Mongols would avert "their onslaughts on Christendom through fear of Divine wrath."<sup>36</sup> In the spring of 1245, he sent several missions to the Mongol Khan; the necessity of such action was further discussed at the council of Lyons which opened on June 28, 1245,

and the Pope also called on the Franciscan and Dominican orders, who were already active in the Near East, to extend their work to the more remote parts of Asia.<sup>37</sup>

Two of the main land routes leading into the Mongol Empire passed through Armenia. The southern route started from Ayas (Lajazzo), the Mediterranean

36. W. W. ROCKHILL, *The Journey of William of Rubruck*, London, 1900, p. XXI.

37. BARONIUS-RAYNALDUS, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, XXI, pp. 293-303. Of the four embassies organized by Innocent IV, two were entrusted to Franciscans and two to the Dominicans. John de Plano Carpini left Lyons on April 16, 1245, and travelled by way of Russia (A. VAN DEN WYNGAERT, *Sinica Franciscana*, Quaracchi-Florence, 1929, vol. I, pp. LIX-LXII, 27-130). Very little is known about Laurence of Portugal, except that he received a letter from the Pope (G. GOLUBOVICH, *Biblioteca Bio-Bibliografica della Terra Santa*, Quaracchi-Florence, 1913, vol. II, pp. 319-324; P. PELLIOI, *Les Mongols et la Papauté*, in: "Revue de l'Orient Chrétien," XXIII (1922-3), pp. 7-9; G. SORANZO, *Il Papato, l'Europa Cristiana e i Tartari*, Milan, 1930, pp. 92-4, 113-4). The Dominicans were André de Longjumeau and Ascelin who also left Lyons in 1245, probably in the spring; PELLIOI, *Op. cit.*, in: "Revue de l'Orient Chrétien," XXIV (1924), pp. 254-335; XXVIII (1931-2), pp. 1-12; B. ALTANER, *Die Dominikanermissionen des 13. Jahrhunderts*, Habelschwerdt, 1924, pp. 52-7, 120-22. It has been established by M. PELLIOI that André de Longjumeau travelled by Syria and Mesopotamia and not by way of Cilicia and Greater Armenia, as it had been suggested ("Rev. de l'Or. Chr.," XXVIII [1931-1932], pp. 10-12).



port of Cilicia; it crossed the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia and the Sultanate of Iconium, passing by Erzinjan which had been one of the important cities of Greater Armenia before the Seljuq conquest. From Erzinjan one could either follow the Euphrates and Tigris to Persia, or, taking a northeasterly direction, reach Erzerum and continue along the valley of the river Araxes and the western shores of the Caspian Sea to Tabriz in north-western Persia.<sup>38</sup> The second route started from Trebizond on the Black Sea and, after reaching Erzerum, proceeded along the valleys of Greater Armenia, as has just been described. Missionaries and merchants, among them the famous Marco Polo, often went by these routes in preference to those which passed through Russia, or Syria and Mesopotamia. They were particularly chosen by those who visited the Ilkhans, that is the khans of Persia, whose power extended over Georgia and Armenia. The Ilkhans resided at Tabriz and Maragha in the province of Adharbaidjan in western Persia, later at Sultaniya, but the armies camped most of the time in Armenia, or just across the border. We have specific mention of the Mongol camps in the plains of Mughan, on the right banks of the lower Kura; on the shores of the Araxes; in the plain of Nakhitchewan; or on the slopes of Alatagh, north of Lake Van, where the khans had built a summer palace.<sup>39</sup>

The exact itinerary of the travellers of the XIII and early XIV Centuries is not always clear, but a few detailed accounts and other contemporary sources prove that a number of Latin missionaries went through Armenia, and even spent some time in this country. The first of these appears to have been the Dominican friar Ascelin, who was entrusted with a mission by Pope Innocent IV in 1245. Ascelin and his companions started from Syria in 1247; we are not sure whether they travelled by way of Cilicia and Greater Armenia, or went by sea to Constantinople and then to a Black Sea port, but we know that they reached Tiflis in the spring of 1247, where they were joined by Guiscard of Cremona who had been living in Georgia for seven years. From Tiflis the missionaries went to the camp of the Mongol general Baiju, where they remained from May 24 to July 25, 1247.<sup>40</sup> From the letter of Baiju to Innocent IV we learn that this camp was "in territorio Sitiens castri." "Sitiens" has been identified with "Sisian," mentioned by the Armenian historian Kirakos, the place where King Het'um I of Cilicia found the armies of Baiju in 1254-1255, when he was on his

38. This route was followed by many merchants in the XIV Century as can be seen from PEGOLOTTI's detailed list of the toll stations between Ayas and Tabriz. FRANCESCO BALDUCCI PEGOLOTTI, *La Pratica della Mercatura*, ed. by ALLAN EVANS, Cambridge, 1936, pp. 28-9, 389-91.

39. J. B. CHABOT, *Histoire du Patriarche Mar Jabalaha III* in: "Revue de l'Orient Latin," II (1894), pp. 76, 125-6, 235; STEPHEN ORBELIAN, *History of Sisakan*, Tiflis, 1910, pp. 405-6, 471-2; KIRAKOS GANDSAKETSII, *History of Armenia*, Tiflis, 1909, pp. 275, 351, 355; French translation by E. DULAURIER, *Les Mongols d'après les Historiens Arméniens*, in: "Journal Asiatique," XI (1858), pp. 439, 464, 470-1. MARCO POLO wrote that "in the summer Armenia is frequented by the whole horde of the Tartars of the Levant" (*The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, translated by SIR HENRY YULE, London 1903, p. 45).

40. P. PELLIOU, *Op. cit.*, in: "Rev. de l'Or. Chr.," XXIV (1924), pp. 262-335; ALTANÉ, *Op. cit.*, pp. 120-5.

way to the court of the Grand Khan, and which was located, in all probability, north of the river Araxes, between the Armenian provinces of Siunik' and Artsakh.<sup>41</sup>

We are better informed about the journey of the famous Franciscan missionary, William of Rubruck, the unofficial ambassador of the French king Saint Louis.<sup>42</sup> On his outward journey William of Rubruck went through Russia, but he returned by the southern route, and spent several months in Armenia during the winter of 1254-1255. He writes that he ascended "along the Araxes from the feast of saint Clement (November 23) to the second Sunday of Quadragesima (February 15)," until he reached the

head of the river, beyond which "is a goodly city called Aarserum" (Erzerum).<sup>43</sup> Having visited the camp of Baiju on the Araxes, he went to Nakhitchewan on December 23, 1254, and remained there until January 13, 1255. In this city, in the southern part of the province of Siunik', there used to be, writes Rubruck, "eighty Hermenian churches; but there are only two small ones now, for the Saracens have destroyed them. In one of these I kept the Christmas feast as well



FIG. 5. — Gospel of 1307 A.D. — First page of the Gospel of St. Luke. — Theological Seminary, Hartford, Conn., Arm.MS.3.

41. P. PELLIOU, *Op. cit.*, pp. 299-302, 325; "Rev. de l'Or. Chr.," XXVIII (1931-2), p. 11. In 1251 Smbat Orbelian, on his way to Karakorum, found Baiju encamped in the province of Haband, at the entrance of Dsagedsor (STEPHEN ORBELIAN, *Op. cit.*, p. 406; M. BROSSET, *Histoire de la Géorgie, Additions et Eclaircissements*, St. Petersburg, 1851 pp. 324-5). Het'um I, returning from Karakorum in 1255, crossed the Araxes, after leaving Tabriz, and came to "Sisian," to the camp of Baiju (DULAURIER, *Op. cit.*, p. 470). DULAURIER's translation has "Bathou-nouin," which is obviously a mistake; "Batchou-nouin," is correctly given in the Armenian edition (*Op. cit.*, p. 355). Ascelin and his companions stopped at Tabriz on their return journey and travelled by way of Mossul, Aleppo and Antioch to Acre (PELLIOU, "Rev. de l'Or. Chr.," XXIV, [1924], p. 328).

42. ROCKHILL, *The Journey of William of Rubruck*, London, 1900; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, pp. 147-332.

43. *Sin. Fr.*, I, p. 321; ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 266.



as I could, with our clerk. The next day the priest of the church died, and a bishop and twelve monks from the mountains came to his funeral."<sup>44</sup> Rubruck had a long conversation with the bishop which he recounts in his Journal. Four days after leaving Nakhitchewan, he "came to the country of Sahensa, once the most powerful Curgian prince, but now tributary to the Tartars, who have destroyed all its fortified places. His father, Zacharias by name, had got this country of the Hermenians for delivering them from the hands of the Saracens. And there are very fine villages there, all of Christians, and having churches, just like the French."<sup>45</sup> Rubruck was entertained by this prince, who showed him "great politeness, as did his wife and his son called Zacharias." On February 2, Rubruck was in Ani, "belonging to Sahensa, the position of which is very strong; and there are in it a thousand churches of the Hermenians."<sup>46</sup> On February 15 he "came to the head of the Araxes, and after crossing a mountain, we came to the Euphrates, along which we descended for eight days, going always westward till we came to a certain port called Camath."<sup>47</sup>

The "Curgian," or Georgian, prince mentioned by Rubruck is well known in Armenian and Georgian history. Sahensa, or rather Shahenshah, was the head of the powerful Zak'arian family, the general-in-chief of the Georgian and Armenian armies.<sup>48</sup> His vast domains comprised the province of Ayrarat, in the heart of Armenia, and Ani, the ancient capital of the Bagratid kings, was also the seat of the Zak'arians, as Rubruck correctly reports. Rubruck probably remained in this city for a fortnight, or slightly longer, since he arrived in the "country of Sahensa" in four days after leaving Nakhitchewan on January 13.

Another Franciscan, John of Monte Corvino, who became the first archbishop of Peking, must have visited Armenia in the latter part of the XIII Century. He was sent as a missionary to the East by the general of his order, Bonagrazia (1279-1283), and he lived in Persia part of the time. In 1289 he went to Rome and he must have traveled by way of Greater Armenia and Cilicia, for he was given a letter to Pope Nicholas IV by King Het'um II of Cilicia.<sup>49</sup> John of Monte Corvino returned to the East in the same year and remained at Tabriz until 1291. His return route must again have been through Cilicia and Greater Armenia, judging from the letters which the Pope sent by him to King Het'um II; to the Catholicos and several Armenian friends; to the Ilkhan Arghun; to the

44. *Sin. Fr.*, I, p. 321; ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 267.

45. *Sin. Fr.*, I, p. 324, ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 271-2.

46. *Sin. Fr.*, I, p. 325-6; ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 273.

47. *Sin. Fr.*, I, p. 326; ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 275.

48. For references to the Armenian historians who speak of Shahenshah and his family see: ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 271-2. ROCKHILL states that this family was "of Armenian (Orpelian) descent"; but these are two distinct families. The Zak'arians, to whom Shahenshah belonged, are known in Georgian sources under the name of Mkhargrdzeli. Their genealogical table is given by BROSSET, *Additions et Eclaircissements*, p. 362. For the rival family of the Orbelians, see: *Ibid.*, p. 351.

49. GOLUBOVICH, *Biblioteca Bio-Bibl.*, I, p. 302; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, p. 336.

Georgian, Jacobite and Nestorian patriarchs; to Dionysius, bishop of Tabriz and to others.<sup>50</sup>

The Dominican Ricoldo of Monte Croce followed the same route at some time between the years 1285 and 1290. His Itinerary contains a brief description of his journey through Cilicia, the Sultanate of Iconium and Greater Armenia, where he suffered from the bitter cold at Erzerum, and admired, from a distance, the lofty grandeur of Mount Ararat "on which had rested the Ark of Noah." He followed the usual track along the Araxes and the western shore of the Caspian Sea to Tabriz, where he spent several months.<sup>51</sup>

The last missionary, whose travels fall within the time in which our manuscripts were illustrated, is Odoric of Pordenone. He left for the East about the year 1310 and, after landing at Trebizond, he "came into Armenia the Greater, to a certain city which is called Arziron (Erzerum), which in time long past was a fine and most wealthy city and it would have been so unto this day but for the Tartars and the Saracens who have done it much damage." From Erzerum he "came to a certain hill which is called Sarbisacalo; and in that country is the mountain whereon is Noah's Ark." He then passed to Tabriz and pursued his journey to the East.<sup>52</sup>

Besides these missionaries, about whom we have definite information, there must have been a number of others. The papal Bulls of the second half of the XIII Century, or of the early XIV Century, repeatedly call for missions "ad Tartaros," as well as to the dissident Christian populations of the Near East.<sup>53</sup> Some of these missions were not able to go beyond Persia and remained for a time in Armenia or its immediate vicinity. At Nakhitchevan, in Armenia, William of Rubruck met a Dominican, Bernard of Catalonia, who "had been with a certain friar from Hungary to Argun at Tauris, to ask leave to go through to Sartach. When they came there they were refused entry, and the Hungarian friar went back by way of Tefelis with a servant; but Friar Bernard had remained at Tauris."<sup>54</sup> At Ani, Rubruck found five other Dominicans. "Four of

50. GOLUBOVICH, *Op. cit.*, p. 330; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, p. LXIX; SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, pp. 273-9; A. C. MOULE, *Christians in China*, London, 1930, p. 167.

51. J. C. M. LAURENT, *Peregrinatores Medii Aevi Quatuor*, Leipzig, 1864, pp. 113-122; ALTANER, *Op. cit.*, pp. 82-3; C. R. BEAZLEY, *The Dawn of Modern Geography*, Oxford, 1906, vol. III, pp. 191-7; P. MANDONNET, *Fra Ricoldo de Conte Croce*, in: "Revue Biblique," II (1893), pp. 190-1.

52. *Sinica Franciscana*, I, pp. 381-2, 415-7; H. YULE AND H. CORDIER, *Cathay and the Way Thither*, London, 1913, vol. II, pp. 100-4. These authors date the journey a little later, between the years 1316 and 1318 (*Ibid.*, p. 9). Sarbisacalo is the form adopted in the translation of Yule-Cordier; in the different manuscripts the name is spelled as Solssacalo, Subissacalo, Sollisacalo, Sovisacalo or Sobissacalo (*Sin. Fr.* I, p. 416). In PERGOLOTTI's list of toll stations this place is called Sermessacalo (*op. cit.*, p. 390). It has been suggested that these corrupt forms may "contain the name of the station of Hassan-Kala'a, some twenty-four miles from Erzerum, near where the roads to Kars and Tabriz separate, perhaps under some form as Serai-Hassan-Kala'a . . . The name may however contain the Armenian *Surp* or *Surpazan*, holy" (YULE-CORDIER, *Op. cit.*, II, p. 101, n. 5).

53. SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, pp. 163, 188, 200, 238, 506.

54. ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 271; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, p. 324; ALTANER, *Op. cit.*, p. 140.



them had come from the Province of France, and the fifth had joined them in Syria . . . and they had letters from the lord Pope to Sartach, to Mangu Chan and to Buri." When Rubruck related to them the difficulties he had encountered, the missionaries "took the road to Tefelis, where are some of their friars, to hold council with them as to what they should do."<sup>55</sup>

In addition to the special religious missions, there were diplomatic exchanges between the Ilkhans and the European powers, in particular the Popes, the kings of France and England, for the Mongols of Persia were anxious to plan a joint military action against the Saracens in Syria and Palestine. Even before this, messengers from the Mongols had come to Europe. When Ascelin left Baiju's camp in 1247, he was accompanied by two envoys called Aybeg and Sargis.<sup>56</sup> Mr. Pelliot has pointed out that the first is



FIG. 6. — English Psalter, XIII Century (after 1262). — The Virgin and Child and two Saints. — Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS 756, fol.10v.

a Turkish name, and its owner was doubtless a Uighur; as for Sargis, or Sergius, he was assuredly a Christian, most probably a Nestorian from Syria or upper Asia.<sup>57</sup> Sargis, however, is not only the Syrian form of Sergius, but also the Armenian, and though the Nestorian theory is much more plausible, it is not entirely impossible that the man may have been an Armenian. An Armenian, by the name of John, had come to the Papal court in 1254. This John, who presented himself as an envoy from Sartach, was probably an impostor; he succeeded how-

55. ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.* p. 274; *Sin. Fr.*, I. p. 326; ALTANER, *Op. cit.*, pp. 139-140; PELLIOU, *Op. cit.*, "Rev. de l'Or. Chr.," XXVIII (1931-2), pp. 78-81.

56. PELLIOU, *Op. cit.*, "Rev. de l'Or. Chr.," XXIV (1924), p. 325; GOLUBOVICH has "Aybez" instead of "Aybeg" (*Biblioteca*, I, p. 213).

57. PELLIOU, *Op. cit.*, p. 327.

ever in gaining credence and the Pope gave him a letter, written on August 29, 1254.<sup>58</sup>

There were numerous diplomatic exchanges after the establishment of the Khanate of Persia. Ambassadors were sent by Hulagu in 1260; by Abagha in 1267, 1269, 1274 and 1276; by Arghun in 1285, 1287, 1289 and 1290; by Ghazan in 1300 and 1301-2; by Oljaitu in 1307; and by Abu Said Bahadur in 1321.<sup>59</sup> Christians again figure among these envoys. Hulagu's ambassador was a certain John of Hungary;<sup>60</sup> two Dominicans accompanied as interpreters the important embassy composed of twenty-four Mongol noblemen who visited Saint Louis in 1261-2;<sup>61</sup> there were also several Dominicans with the embassy of 1274 which appeared before the council at Lyons.<sup>62</sup> Among the ambassadors sent by Abagha in 1276 were two Georgians, James and John Vassali,<sup>63</sup> and in 1289 Arghun's embassy was headed by a Genoese merchant, Buscarello de Gisulfi, who came a second time with the ambassadors of Ghazan.<sup>64</sup> The most interesting embassy was that of the Nestorian bishop Rabban Sauma, in 1287, the detailed account of which is preserved in the life of the Nestorian Catholicos Mar Yabalaha III.<sup>65</sup>

The answers of the Popes, of the kings of France and England, and of other European rulers, were sometimes given to the Mongol envoys, but frequently special emissaries were sent, missionaries or laymen. In 1277 Charles of Anjou had despatched William of Didelon and Robert of Melun to Abagha.<sup>66</sup> Five Franciscans carried the letter of Nicholas III to Abagha in 1278, and two others went to Arghun's court in 1291.<sup>67</sup> The envoys of Philippe le Bel, Gobert of Helleville, Robert of Senlis, William of Bruyères and Odard travelled with the Nestorian bishop Rabban Sauma;<sup>68</sup> in 1291, Galfridus de Langele, Nicholas of Chartres and a third envoy from Edward I returned with Buscarello. We know

58. BARONIUS-RAYNALDUS, *Ann. Eccl.*, XXI, pp. 453-4; ALTANER, *Op. cit.*, pp. 138-9; SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, p. 140; PELLIOU, *Op. cit.*, in: "Rev. de l'Or. Chr.," XXVIII (1931-2), pp. 78-82. The Dominicans whom Rubruck met at Ani may have travelled with the Armenian monk, but we have no definite information concerning their journey.

59. J. B. CHABOT, *Notes sur les Relations du Roi Argoun avec l'Occident*, in: "Revue de l'Orient Latin," II (1894), pp. 566-643. For the correspondence which is not included in CHABOT's article see: SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, pp. 173, 200, 204-5, 219-224, 230-8, 328-9, 333-4, 337-9, 349-353; ABEL RÉMUSAT, *Mémoires sur les Relations Politiques des Princes Chrétiens et Particulièrement des Rois de France avec les Empereurs Mongols*, in: "Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres," VII (1824), pp. 335-438; BARONIUS-RAYNALDUS, *Ann. Eccl.*, XXII, pp. 59, 213, 329, 420-3, 573; XXIII, pp. 38, 63-6, 99-102, 406; XXIV, 73, 140.

60. SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, pp. 173-4; BEAZLEY, *Op. cit.*, III, p. 188.

61. ALTANER, *Op. cit.*, p. 141; SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, p. 192-3. The name of the khan who sent this embassy is not known; SORANZO suggests that it may have been Bereka, khan of Kiptchak.

62. SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, pp. 219-224; GOLUBOVICH, *Bibl. Bio-Bibl.*, II, pp. 419-420.

63. SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, pp. 230-2; BROSSET, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, I, 2, p. 597, n. 4.

64. SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, pp. 279-284; CHABOT, *Op. cit.*, pp. 593-616.

65. CHABOT, *Histoire du Patriarche Mar Jabalaha III*, in: "Revue de l'Orient Latin," II (1894), pp. 80-122; JAMES A. MONTGOMERY, *History of Mar Yaballaha III*, New York, 1927, pp. 52-73.

66. SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, p. 233.

67. GOLUBOVICH, *Biblioteca Bio-Bibl.*, I, pp. 300, 354-6; II, pp. 426-8, 426-7; SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, pp. 236-8, 290-6; CHABOT, *Op. cit.*, pp. 620, 623.

68. MOULE, *Op. cit.*, pp. 109, 112; SORANZO, *Op. cit.*, p. 263.



that this group visited Erzerum, Baiburt, Ardjesh in Greater Armenia,<sup>69</sup> and that Rabban Sauma and his companions also passed through Armenia, for they landed at a port on the Black Sea.<sup>70</sup> Judging from the letters they carried, the Franciscans William da Chieri and Matthew da Chieti must have travelled in 1291 by way of Trebizond, Tiflis and Greater Armenia to Tabriz and Maragha in Persia.<sup>71</sup>

Armenians also met the European missionaries and ambassadors at the Mongol courts and camps, for Greater Armenia was at this time under Mongol sovereignty and the Cilician kings had contracted an alliance with the Mongols. Numerous references and descriptions of visits paid by the Armenian kings and princes are to be found in contemporary historical works; of these only a few need to be mentioned here. According to the Syrian historian, Bar Hebraeus, among the many princes and dignitaries who witnessed the election of the Grand Khan Güyük in 1246, there were "from Cilicia, Haîtûm the king (Het'um I), and from the Iberians David the Great and David the Less . . . and ambassadors from the Franks."<sup>72</sup> The latter must have been John de Plano Carpini and his companions, for we know from John's own account that they were present at this ceremony.<sup>73</sup> Bar Hebraeus is misinformed about King Het'um, for there is no record of a visit by Het'um, prior to his journey of 1254,<sup>74</sup> but we know that princes from Greater Armenia went to the election of Güyük. According to the Georgian Chronicles one of the two princes mentioned above, David, son of Giorgi Lasha, was accompanied by his general-in-chief Shahenshah, the same Shahenshah whom Rubruck visited at Ani some years later. Another prominent member of the Zak'arian family, the *atabek* Avag also seems to have been there.<sup>75</sup> In a letter to his brother-in-law, the king of Cyprus, the Constable Smbat, brother of Het'um I, speaks of the messengers sent by the Pope to the Mongols, though he does not say whether he encountered any of them.<sup>76</sup> At the great assembly of July 1264, the historian Vardan, who had been specially invited by Hulagu, saw the prince

69. BEAZLEY, *Op. cit.*, III, pp. 492-3; CHABOT, *Op. cit.*, p. 262, n. 1.

70. CHABOT, *Op. cit.*, p. 121; MONTGOMERY, *Op. cit.*, p. 73. We are told that Rabban Sauma returned by the same route by which he had travelled West, and this, we know, was from a Black Sea port, probably Trebizond (CHABOT, *Op. cit.*, p. 82; MONTGOMERY, *Op. cit.*, p. 52).

71. GOLUBOVICH, *Bibl. Bio-Bibl.*, II, pp. 472-7.

72. *The Chronography of Gregory Abû'l Faraj . . . Commonly Known as Bar Hebraeus*, translated by E. A. W. BUDGE, Oxford, 1932, vol. I, p. 411.

73. *Sinica Franciscana*, I, pp. 116-120.

74. GROUSSET mentions among those present at the election of 1246, the Constable Smbat, brother of King Het'um I (*L'Empire des Steppes*, Paris, 1939, p. 335), but the Armenian historian Kirakos to whom he refers has no such statement. Smbat set out from Cilicia only in 1247, and the dates of his journey, 1247-1250, are correctly given by GROUSSET on page 336.

75. BROSSET, *Histoire de la Géorgie*, I, 2, p. 538; *Additions et Eclaircissements*, p. 317.

76. This letter, written from Samarqand on February 7, 1248, is given in the old French translation by GUILLAUME DE NANGIS in his *Vie de Saint Louis (Recueil des Historiens de la France*, vol. XX, pp. 361-3). See also: YULE-CORDIER, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 263; VINCENT DE BEAUVAIS, *Speculum Historiale*, Douai, 1624, p. 1317.

of Antioch, Bohemond VI, who had come with Het'um I.<sup>77</sup> Another Armenian historian, Stephen Orbelian, archbishop of Siunik', was present at the christening of Arghun's son. He tells us that a bishop sent by the Pope "baptized the young son of the monarch and named him Theodosius, whom they called Kharpanda (servant of God), and placed him in the arms of a Frankish prince by the name of Sirtchaz."<sup>78</sup> During his journey William of Rubruck frequently enquired for King Het'um I who was expected at the court of Mangu Khan, "constantly hoping that the King of Hermenia would come."<sup>79</sup> Though the two did not meet, Het'um was able to help Rubruck indirectly; he intervened for the servants whom the latter had been forced to leave at the camp of the Mongol general Batu, and on his return Rubruck was told that "had it not been for the King of Hermenia, who had comforted them greatly and recommended them to Sartach, they would have been lost."<sup>80</sup> On his way back to Cilicia, in 1255-6, Het'um I stopped for some time in Greater Armenia. "Christian priests and princes" came to visit him, and he received with kindness "the Christians from all nations."<sup>81</sup> It is quite possible that European missionaries may have figured among these, seeking the friendly help of a Christian monarch.

Armenians must have also served as interpreters, for they were familiar with the different eastern languages. Stephen Orbelian tells us that Prince Smbat of Siunik' spoke five languages, "Armenian, Georgian, Uigur, Persian and even Mongol."<sup>82</sup> At the camp of Sartach, Rubruck found "Hermenian priests who knew Turkish and Arabic" and who translated, probably into Turkish, the letters of Saint Louis which had previously been translated into Arabic and Syrian; these interpreters were "Hermenians from Greater Hermenia."<sup>83</sup> At Mangu's court Rubruck met an Armenian monk, by the name of Sargis, who helped him "with the language," though he did not act as an interpreter.<sup>84</sup> This monk had

77. DULAURIER, *Les Mongols d'Après les Historiens Arméniens*, in: "Journal Asiatique," XVI (1860), p. 300-1; VARDAN VARDAPET, *Armenian History*, Venice, 1862, p. 156.

78. STEPHEN ORBELIAN, *Op. cit.*, p. 482. It has been suggested that this Frankish prince may have been BUSCARELLO, the special envoy of the Mongols (CHABOT, *Op. cit.*, p. 593; H. HOWORTH, *History of the Mongols*, London, 1876-1927, vol. III, p. 355). According to a collection of Franciscan documents (*Brit. Mus. Nero A IX*), most of which date in the first half of the XIV Century, the baptism was performed by a Franciscan (GO-LUBOVICH, *Bibl. Bio-Bibl.*, II, p. 73).

79. ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 225; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, p. 289.

80. ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 257; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, p. 314. At other times also, the Armenian kings, who were on friendly terms with the Mongol rulers, were able to come to the assistance of their fellow Christians. In 1295, the Nestorian Catholicos, Mar Yabalaha III, sought refuge in the suite of King Het'um II who had come to visit Ghazan, and Het'um intervened for him (CHABOT, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-9). It was also thanks to Het'um that the destruction of Christian churches was stopped (BAR HEBRAEUS, *Chronography*, p. 506; STEPHEN ORBELIAN, *Op. cit.*, p. 474).

81. DULAURIER, *Op. cit.*, in: "Journal Asiatique," XI (1858), p. 471; KIRAKOS, *Op. cit.*, pp. 355-6.

82. STEPHEN ORBELIAN, *Op. cit.*, p. 405.

83. ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, pp. 105, 166; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, pp. 203, 243.

84. ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 205; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, p. 274. This Sargis, or Sergius, who professed to have come from Jerusalem, was a native of Greater Armenia and not a real monk. "He had taken no orders," writes Rubruck, "and did not know a single letter, but was a cloth weaver, as I found out in his own country, which I went through on my way back" (ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 193; *Sin. Fr.*, I, p. 266).



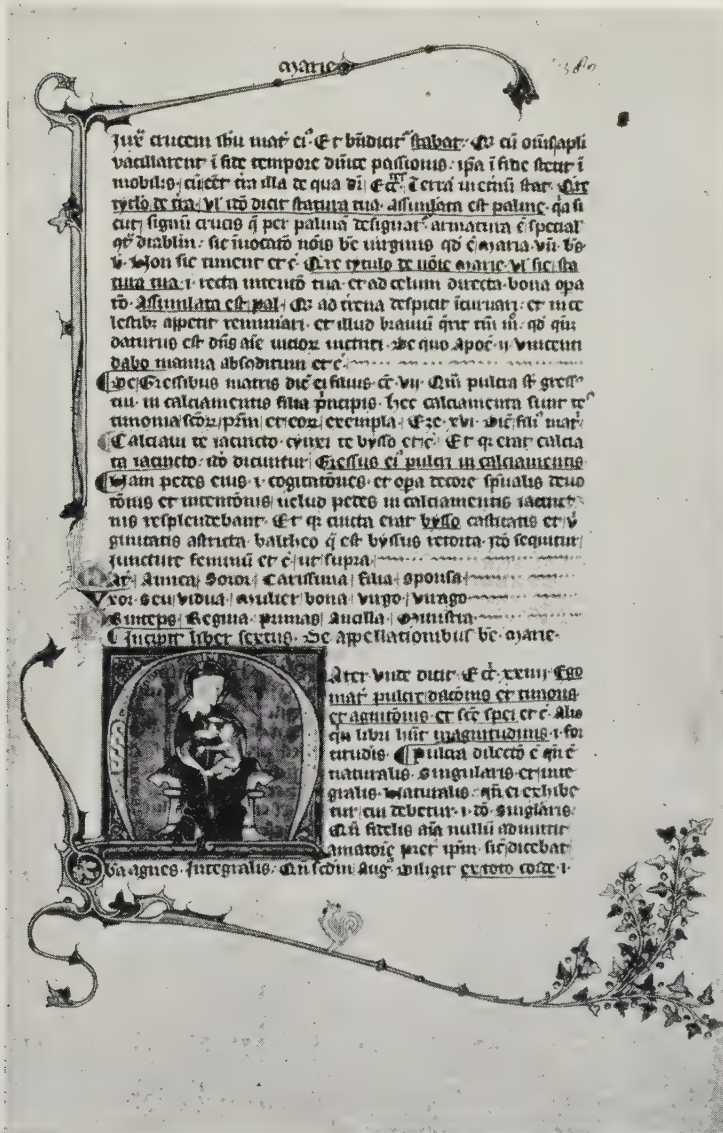


FIG. 7. — Page from: ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De Laudibus Beatae Virginis*. — Wellesley College Library, Wellesley, Mass.

the time of his departure, on August 18.

In spite of the comparative scarcity of detailed accounts, we have thus ample evidence of the presence of Latin monks in Armenia, and of contacts between Armenians and European travellers. The most significant fact for our purpose is that through these missions, as well as by other channels, illuminated manuscripts

erected an oratory, with "an altar right beautifully decked. For there was embroidered on a cloth of gold an image of the Saviour, of the Blessed Virgin, of John the Baptist and of two angels, and the lines of the body and of the garments were marked out with pearls, and there was a great silver cross with gems in the angles and the middle, and many other church ornaments, and an oil lamp having eight lights was burning before the altar."<sup>85</sup>

Rubruck made friends with him even though he did not always approve of his conduct, and he asked to be allowed to live with him. The Khan "sent to the monk to know whether he would like our company, and he replied cheerfully that he would. From then on we had a better dwelling living with the monk."<sup>86</sup>

This occurred on January 12, and Rubruck was with the Armenian monk until

85. ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 168. *Sin. Fr.*, I, pp. 245-6. This silver cross had been brought from Jerusalem by another Armenian (ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 191; *Sin. Fr.*, I, p. 264).

86. ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 183; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, pp. 257-8.

and historiated works came to the East. William of Rubruck carried with him a Psalter, given by the Queen of France, "in which were right beautiful pictures" and which was "much noticed on account of the gilded pictures in it."<sup>87</sup> A versified Bible and a Breviary also seem to have been illustrated, for Mangu Khan "made careful inquiry about the pictures and what they meant."<sup>88</sup>

Historiated works were intentionally chosen as a help in the instruction of the pagans or infidels. A tent, in the shape of a chapel, sent by Saint Louis to the Mongol Khan, was adorned with scenes from the life of Christ, and Joinville states twice that the purpose was to show the pagans what they should believe: "*pour aus moustrer et enseigner comment il devoient croire.*"<sup>89</sup> In Peking, John of Monte Corvino had had "six pictures made of the Old and New Testament for the instruction of the unlearned." Pope Clement commended him in two different letters for having these pictures painted "in testimony of the wonderful works of our God, that ignorant people who have never heard these things may learn by the same pictures to understand God and his wonderful works."<sup>90</sup>

It should also be recalled that the official embassies often carried back gifts. In a curious letter written in Mongol, and sent to Philippe le Bel in 1289, Arghun says that he will be very pleased if the king will send him ambassadors who can speak several languages, bringing presents, "rarities and many-colored pictures."<sup>91</sup> The answers of Edward I and Pope Nicholas III show that they had received similar requests.<sup>92</sup> Though in this instance the Pope excuses himself, saying that it is not the custom of ecclesiastics to send gifts, we know that rich presents were sent at other times. The previous year the Nestorian bishop Rabban Sauma had returned to Arghun's court "with the presents which he brought from the Reverend Pope as well as from all the Kings of the Franks."<sup>93</sup> We learn from other sources that one of these presents was a chapel. In a note kept with Arghun's letter of the year 1289, Buscarello reports that Arghun had mass celebrated in the chapel that "*il fet porter o soi a Rabanata, evesque nectorin, qui l'autre an, vous vint en message.*"<sup>94</sup> Stephen Orbelian, archbishop of Siunik', was present at this ceremony and he was asked by Arghun to bless the church "which the great Pope

87. ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, pp. 103, 107; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, pp. 202, 204.

88. ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 185; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, p. 259.

89. *Histoire de Saint Louis par Jean Sire de Joinville*, ed. by N. DE WAILLY, Paris, 1868, pp. 47-8. The subjects represented on this tent were the Annunciation, the Baptism, the Passion scenes, the Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Ghost (*Ibid.*, p. 168). In addition to this tent, André de Longjumeau, the king's envoy, took with him chalices, books, and all that was needed to celebrate mass.

90. A. C. MOULE, *Op. cit.*, pp. 178, 184, 188.

91. CHABOT, *Op. cit.*, pp. 603-4.

92. *Ibid.*, pp. 615, 620.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 121; MONTGOMERY, *Op. cit.*, p. 73. Before this Pope Innocent IV had presented handsome vestments to Baiju's envoys; in 1274 Pope Gregory X gave rich garments to two of the ambassadors who were converted and baptized (ABEL RÉMUSAT, *Op. cit.*, in: "Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres," VI [1822], p. 426; VII [1824], p. 345).

94. CHABOT, *Op. cit.*, p. 612; MOULE, *Op. cit.*, p. 118. By Rabanata, Buscarello means Rabban Sauma.



of Rome" had sent.<sup>95</sup> This church was so close to the King's tent "that the ropes of the tent-cloths of the church were intercrossed with those of his house."<sup>96</sup> We are not told whether like the chapel-tent sent by Saint Louis this one was also adorned with Gospel scenes, but this seems likely. Another, and probably later gift, was "a beautiful cross of fine gold, ornamented with precious stones of great value, in which was a fragment of the adorable wood of the Cross of our Saviour, which the Lord Pope of the Romans had sent to him (Ghazan) as a sign of honor."<sup>97</sup> Ghazan gave it to the Catholicos Mar Yabalaha. This shows how gifts sent to the Mongol rulers may have passed into the hands of their Christian subjects.<sup>98</sup> Arghun's request for "many-colored pictures," and the importance attached to paintings of sacred subjects as a means of instruction, suggest that illuminated manuscripts figured among the presents sent to the Mongol rulers.

Manuscripts also came into these regions in a more indirect way. While he was at Bagdad, Ricoldo of Monte Croce heard that Christians, sold as captives after the fall of Saint-Jean-d'Acre, had been brought as far as Bagdad. He looked in vain for any Dominicans whom he might redeem; he found instead some of the loot, manuscripts and vestments, which he bought from the Moslem merchants. He speaks repeatedly of these books: "*ecce libros multos et scripta fidei invenio et fratres non invenio*," mentioning breviaries, missals, and a copy of the *Moralia* of Saint Gregory.<sup>99</sup> After the capture of Erzerum by Baiju, the Armenians in the Mongol army saved many "liturgical books, Martyrologia, Apostolaria, Lectionaries, Bibles, New Testaments in gilt letters and richly executed," which they carried back and deposited in the monasteries of eastern Armenia.<sup>100</sup> These were Armenian manuscripts, but the Christians of Armenia may also have bought Latin books which had been stolen from the monasteries

95. ORBELIAN, *Op. cit.*, p. 482; MOULE, *Op. cit.*, pp. 116-7.

96. MONTGOMERY, *Op. cit.*, p. 74; CHABOT, *Op. cit.*, p. 122. Earlier churches erected in the Mongol camp, for instance that of Hulagu's wife who was a Christian, were also tent-churches. The Armenian historian Vardan reports that "the Tartars transported with them a tent of cloth having the shape of a church" (DULAURIER, *Op. cit.*, in: "Journal Asiatique," XVI [1860], p. 290; VARDAN VARDAPET, *Op. cit.*, p. 149).

97. CHABOT, *Op. cit.*, p. 262.

98. When Arghun asked the Archbishop Stephen Orbelian, the Nestorian Catholicos and his twelve bishops to bless the church sent by the pope, he clothed them "with his own hands, with the pontifical vestments which he had assigned for the Catholicos, for us (i. e. Stephen Orbelian), and for all the bishops" (*Op. cit.*, p. 482). In the light of what has been said above, one may wonder whether the "pontifical vestments" do not refer to vestments sent by the Pope, together with the chapel. We know that such vestments had been sent to Mar Yabalaha: "a crown of pure gold for his head, adorned with very precious stones, and clothing for the vestments of his function, red and embroidered with gold, and shoes sewn with small pearls, and boots, and also a ring from his own finger" (MONTGOMERY, *Op. cit.*, p. 72; CHABOT, *Op. cit.*, p. 120).

99. R. RÖHRICHT, *Lettres de Ricoldo de Monte Croce*, in: "Archives de l'Orient Latin," II, 2, pp. 277, 280, 289.

100. BROSSET, *Additions et Eclaircissements*, ch. XXV, *Histoire de la nation des Archers. . . par MALAKIA-ABEGHA*, p. 446. MAGHAK'IA's contemporary, KIRAKOS, also speaks of the large number of Bibles and Gospels taken by the Mongols at Erzerum, and sold to the Armenians (*Op. cit.*, p. 264; DULAURIER, *Op. cit.*, in: "Journal Asiatique," XI [1858], p. 427).

of the Holy Land.

Finally, there must have been manuscripts in the Latin monasteries of the Near East. It is true that John of Monte Corvino complains that he only has a "Breviary with short Lessons and a small Missal" and begs "for an Antiphoner and a Legends of the Saints, a Gradual and a Psalter,"<sup>101</sup> but John was in far away Peking where he had remained alone and "without confession for eleven years," while there was constant intercourse between western Europe and the Near East, and the monasteries of this region must have been well supplied.

Franciscan missionaries had come to Georgia in the early XIII Century. In a Bull dated April 11, 1233, Pope Gregory recommended to the king the mission headed by James of Rossano who was visiting Georgia for the second time.<sup>102</sup> Dominicans had arrived shortly after, for in the encyclical of 1256, the general of the order, Humbert de Romans, states that they had been active in Georgia for more than eighteen years.<sup>103</sup> In 1240 eight Dominicans were recommended to the queen and to her son by Gregory IX; one of these missionaries must have been Guiscard of Cremona who joined Ascelin's mission in 1247, and who had been living in Tiflis for seven years.<sup>104</sup> By the middle of the century the Catholic establishments had become more important. Friar Bernard of Catalonia, whom Rubruck met at Nakhitchevan, "had remained in Georgia with a certain friar of the Holy Sepulchre who had large holdings in land there."<sup>105</sup> Georgia is frequently mentioned in the Papal Bulls, and the ambassadors sent to the Mongol rulers often also carried letters addressed to the king and the bishops of Georgia.

Western Persia, the ancient province of Adharbaidjan, with its large Christian population, also attracted many missionaries sent not only to convert the Mongols but also to bring into the Catholic fold the members of the eastern churches. Tabriz, for a time the capital of the Ilkhans, was the most important missionary center. Marco Polo found there many "Armenians, Nestorians, Jacobites, Georgians, Persians and finally the natives of the city themselves who are worshipers of Mahomet."<sup>106</sup> The Franciscans were again the first missionaries to arrive and for a time they shared their house with the Dominicans. When John of Monte Corvino returned to Tabriz in 1289, he lived for two years "with the Minor and Preaching Brothers who were dwelling there in one place

101. MOULE, *Op. cit.*, p. 175.

102. GOLUBOVICH, *Bibl. Bio-Bibl.*, II, pp. 299-300; ALTANER, *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

103. ALTANER, *Op. cit.*, pp. 67-8.

104. GOLUBOVICH, *Bibl. Bio-Bibl.*, II, p. 300; ALTANER, *Op. cit.*, p. 68; PELLIOU, *Op. cit.*, in: "Rev. de l'Or. Chr.," XXIV (1924), p. 292.

105. ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 271; *Sinica Franciscana*, I, p. 324. These establishments were not yet fully organized monasteries, for the list of 1277 does not include a convent at Tiflis (ALTANER, *Op. cit.*, p. 70), but there was certainly a *domus*, for the five friars whom Rubruck met at Ani returned to Tiflis to consult with their brethren (ROCKHILL, *Op. cit.*, p. 274; *Sin. Fr.*, I, p. 326).

106. *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, p. 75.



preaching the faith of Christ to the heathens and baptizing."<sup>107</sup> By about 1310 the Dominicans of Tabriz were sufficiently numerous to have a house of their own.<sup>108</sup> In the "*De Locis Fratrum Minorum et Praedicatorum in Tartaria*," a document probably composed before 1318, two Franciscan monasteries and one Dominican are listed in Tabriz.<sup>109</sup>

The Catholic establishments of Greater Armenia were not as ancient or as important as the ones mentioned above, or as the settlements in Cilicia; but it should be recalled that there was frequent intercourse between Georgia and Armenia, which at this time was under Georgian rule. The Armenians of the eastern provinces were also in close contact with western Persia, where there were large Armenian colonies, particularly in Tabriz. In Armenia itself Franciscan monasteries existed before 1318 at Erzerum, Karakilissé and at Salmastrum, west of Lake Urmiah.<sup>110</sup> In the eastern section of the country the activity of the Dominicans was by far the most important, and this activity should be briefly sketched, even though its most vital period comes after 1318, that is after the date when western themes appear in manuscripts illuminated by T'oros of Taron.

In 1312 the Dominican missions of Asia were organized into the special Society of Peregrinating Brothers, with Franco of Perugia as their vicar general. Shortly after, in 1318, Pope John XXII appointed Franco as Archbishop of Sultaniya, with six other Dominicans as suffragans. Three of the episcopal sees were in western Persia: at Tabriz, where there had been Dominican friars since the latter part of the XIII Century; at Dehikerkan; and at Maragha, northwest of Tabriz.<sup>111</sup> Of these the see of Maragha played the most important part in the relations with Armenia. Its bishop, Bartholomew of Bologna (Bartholomew de Podio) knew Persian and he later learnt Armenian; his reputation as a scholar

107. MOULE, *Op. cit.*, p. 171.

108. G. GOLUBOVICH, *S. Domenico nell' apostolato dei suoi figli in Oriente*, in: "Miscellanea Domenicana," Rome, 1923, p. 219.

109. GOLUBOVICH, *Bibl. Bio-Bibl.*, II, p. 72, dates this document about 1320-1330, but in a recent article R. LOENERTZ has assigned an earlier date to it, because the Dominican establishment of Sultaniya, which became the metropolitan see in 1318, is not mentioned (*Les Missions Dominicaines en Orient au Quatorzième Siècle*, in: "Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum," II [1932], pp. 73-5).

110. GOLUBOVICH, *Bibl. Bio-Bibl.*, II, pp. 72, 544-5. Three Franciscan friars were killed at Erzinjan in 1314, but there is no other mention of the presence of Latin monks in this city (*Ibid.*, pp. 66-8, 544).

111. The six suffragan bishops are named in the Papal Bull; they are: Gerard Calvet, William Adam, Bartholomew de Podio, Bernardin of Piacenza, Bernard Moreti, Bartholomew Aballiat, but no sees are specified (BARONIUS-RAYNALDUS, *Ann. Eccl.*, XXIV, pp. 140-1; GOLUBOVICH, *Bibl. Bio-Bibl.*, III, pp. 198-204). GOLUBOVICH includes Nakhitchevan in Armenia among the six sees (*Ibid.*, p. 205; *op. cit.*, in: "Misc. Domen.", 1923, p. 219), in the place of Kaffa, in the Chersonese, mentioned by MORTIER (*Histoire des Maîtres Généraux de l'Ordre des Frères Prêcheurs*, Paris, 1903, II, p. 511), or of Sivas, mentioned by LOENERTZ (*Op. cit.*, p. 39). Nakhitchevan does not appear to have become a Catholic see until the establishment of the Armenian Dominican order of the United Brethren in 1356, and the first bishop who is mentioned there is Thomas of Djahuk (L. ALISHAN, *Sisakan*, Venice, 1893, p. 388). Although ALISHAN says that Bartholomew of Bologna probably went to Nakhitchevan, no such statement is to be found in the contemporary account of Bartholomew's disciple, John of K'rna, according to whom Bartholomew died at K'rna, three years after going there from Maragha (GALANUS, *Conciliationis Ecclesiae Armenae cum Romana*, Rome, 1650, p. 520. See also: J. QUÉTIF AND J. ECHARD, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, Paris, 1719, I, 581).

spread to Armenia, in particular to the monastery of Gladsor. The abbot, Esayi Ntchetsi, for whom T'oros of Taron had illustrated the Bible of 1318, was a man of keen intellectual curiosity, anxious to widen his field of knowledge by becoming acquainted with western literary works. One of the monks of his monastery, John of Erzinjan, translated into Armenian the treatise of saint Thomas Aquinas on the Seven Sacraments, and a copy, written at Gladsor in 1321 or 1325, is preserved in the Etchmiadzin Library.<sup>112</sup> This was followed by the translation of other works of saint Thomas, and of the sermons and commentaries of Bartholomew of Bologna.<sup>113</sup> Monks from Gladsor went to Maragha for purposes of study and some were converted to Catholicism. The leader of the movement was John of K'rna who, after spending a few years at Maragha, invited Bartholomew to K'rna, and built a monastery which became the gathering place of the converts. The movement extended, and a Papal Bull of 1356 recognized the Armenian-Dominican order of the United Brethren (*Fratres Unitores*), with Nakhitchevan as one of its principal centers.<sup>114</sup>

These relations between Gladsor and Maragha, which develop after 1318, do not explain the presence of western themes in manuscripts written in 1307 and 1318. However, the fact that close contacts were so rapidly established indicates that the monks of Gladsor were already acquainted with Latin missionaries,<sup>115</sup> and the earlier contacts should be remembered in order to see how western types could appear in the manuscripts of T'oros of Taron.

Strangely enough, except for the nursing Virgin no other western themes occur in the manuscripts of Greater Armenia illuminated at the time when there were close relations between the Armenians and the Dominicans, and when Armenian-Catholic monasteries were established. There has been no western influence, strictly speaking, on Armenian art. T'oros of Taron copied some new compositions which he happened to see; but in the major part of his work he remained faithful to the Armenian tradition of the preceding centuries.

March, 1945.

SIRARPIE DER NERSESSIAN.

112. Etchmiadzin Library, No. 505/560. The two dates given in the colophon do not agree: "This book of the Sacraments was written in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ 1325, on the 8th of the month of October, translated two years previously; and according to the Armenian era in 770 (A.D. 1321)." See: ARCHBISHOP GAREGIN HOVSEPIAN, *Khaghbak'ians or Proshians*, vol. III, New York, 1942-3, pp. 174-5.

113. The complete list of translations is given by ALISHAN, *Sisakan*, pp. 384-5. See also: M. A. VAN DEN OUDENRIJN, *Eine armenische Uebersetzung der Summa Theologica des hl. Thomas im 14. Jahrhundert*, in: "Divus Thomas," VIII (1930), pp. 245-278. Id., *Das "Buch Albert" in der armenischen Literatur*, in: "Divus Thomas," XVIII (1940), pp. 428-448. Id., *Die Miabanoghq von Qrhmay und ihre literarische Tätigkeit*, in: "Studia Catholica," VIII (1932). Id., *Annotationes Bibliographicae Armeno-Dominicanae*, in: "Analecta Sacri Ordinis Praedicatorum," 1920-21.

114. GALANUS, *Op. cit.*, pp. 508-531; F. TOURNEBIZE, *Les Frères Uniteurs ou Dominicains Arméniens*, in: "Revue de l'Orient Chrétien," XXII (1920-1), pp. 145-161, 249-279; L. ALISHAN, *Op. cit.*, pp. 382-408.

115. There seems to have been a Dominican monastery at Maragha before this city became an episcopal see, for it is listed in the *De Locis* which LOENERTZ assigns to a date earlier than 1318 (*Op. cit.*, pp. 74-6).





NOTE ON  
A CONTROVERSIAL PASSAGE  
IN SUGER'S  
*DE CONSECRATIONE*  
*ECCLÉSIAE SANCTI DIONYSII*

—I—

SUMNER Crosby's monograph on St. Denis<sup>1</sup>—as worthy a memorial to Henri Focillon as any scholar and teacher could wish for—has greatly clarified our ideas as to the appearance of the "maistre abaie" before Suger transformed it into the first monument of Gothic.

1. S. MCK. CROSBY, *The Abbey of St. Denis*, I, NEW HAVEN, 1942 (hereafter quoted as "CROSBY").

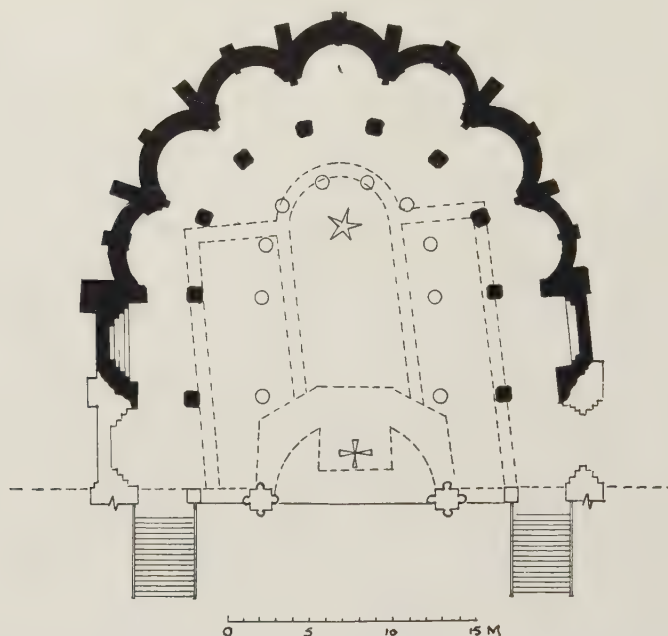


FIG. 1. — ST. DENIS, CHOIR. COMPARATIVE PLAN, BASED ON CROSBY, FIGS. 88-92.

- Existing Parts of Suger's Choir.
- Destroyed Parts of Suger's Choir.
- ⊞ Fulrad's Crypt and Hilduin's Chapel.
- ☆ Location of Altar of the Relics.
- ✚ Location of *Altare Salvatoris et Sanctae Crucis*.

According to Crosby's findings, the Abbey Church constructed under Abbot Fulrad (elected in 749) and dedicated in the presence of Charlemagne on February 24, 775, was a basilica with twin towers in the west. The east part of the church, however, was—for the first time north of the Alps—built "*Romano more*." As in the three great Constantinian Basilicas in Rome, it consisted of a continuous transept, projecting considerably beyond the side-aisles and directly connecting with a single apse. Crosby was able to identify the substructure of this apse in the remnants of an annular crypt the exterior wall of which is still extant beneath the present choir. In combination with earlier plans, these remnants indicate a squarish *confessio* with two curved passage-ways, the whole embedded in heavy, somewhat irregularly polygonal masonry (Fig. 1). As Crosby rightly points out, it was this annular crypt above which was built the apse of Fulrad's basilica—although Crosby's assumption that the apse remained polygonal also



above ground may seem open to question<sup>2</sup>—and in which were kept the relics of Saint Denis and his “companions” until they were moved to Suger’s upper choir in 1144.<sup>3</sup>

The floor of Fulrad’s crypt was 1.05 meters lower than the pavement of his nave (which pavement was in turn 1.10 meters lower than the present one), and its vault can be presumed to have risen to a total height of about three meters. The crypt thus formed, in the interior of the apse, an elevated tribune or platform somewhat less than two meters higher than the pavement of the original nave (Fig. 2,A).

To the east of Fulrad’s apse, and directly adjoining it, an addition was made in 832 by Abbot Hilduin. A sunken chapel or “semi-crypt” not uncommon in Carolingian and Ottonian architecture, it consisted of three parallel, barrel-vaulted

2. As R. KRAUTHEIMER has shown (*The Carolingian Revival of Early Christian Architecture*, in: “Art Bulletin,” XXIV, 1942, p. 1 ss.), the plan of the three great Constantinian Basilicas was deliberately revived in connection with Charlemagne’s general cultural and political program. Now, since a purely semicircular apse is no less characteristic of this “Roman plan” than a continuous projecting transept, it would be surprising if the first monumental manifestation of a “back to Rome” movement would have retained the orientalizing polygonal apse significantly popular in pre-Carolingian and what may be called extra-Carolingian architecture. There is sufficient evidence to show that Fulrad’s basilica was erected on a new site and that, therefore, the crypt could not have been taken over from the old Merovingian Church of St. Denis. But CROSBY himself has rightly pointed out (pp. 90-93) that Fulrad’s church was probably “well advanced when Pepin the Short died in 768,” that is to say, before the Carolingian revival had set in. One may thus entertain the hypothesis that Fulrad’s church as a whole had not been conceived *Romano more* from the outset; in fact a “Roman transept” would have been as anachronistic under Pepin as a polygonal apse—and one laid out in unusually awkward and irregular fashion—was under Charlemagne. If this hypothesis were admitted, the crypt (almost invariably the first portion to be constructed) would have been finished by the time of Charlemagne’s accession, but he would still have had the opportunity of revising the rest *Romano more* and of building up the apse in semicircular shape (which would not have been difficult in view of the enormous thickness of the substructure). Such a change in plan—amounting to a victory of Rome over Ravenna—may even account for the curiously labored phrase “*ubi . . . a novo aedificavimus opere*” (“where we have built from the new work”) which appears in Charlemagne’s famous deed of February 25, 775 (reprinted in: CROSBY, p. 91, note 24), and may be freely rendered as “where we have built with the new work [“new” in contradistinction to the old Merovingian church which had been built on an entirely different site] as a starting point.” While this essay was in print doubts as to the polygonal exterior of the apse proper have also been expressed in two reviews of CROSBY’s book: “Art Bulletin,” XXVI, 1944, p. 53 ss. (E. BALDWIN SMITH) and “American Journal of Archaeology,” XLVIII, 1944, p. 218 ss. (R. KRAUTHEIMER).

3. CROSBY, p. 177. The fact that the relics were kept in the annular crypt up to 1144 may serve to explain a statement in SUGER’s *De rebus in administratione sua gestis*, XXXII (LECOY DE LA MARCHE, *Oeuvres Complètes de Suger*, Paris, 1867, p. 195, and *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 186, col. 1232, A) where he speaks of his famous Golden Crucifix as being erected “on the very same spot where the blessed Saint Denis had rested five hundred years or even more, that is to say from the time of King Dagobert up to our own day” (“*Eodem sane loco beatus Dionysius quingentis annis et eo amplius, videlicet a tempore Dagoberti usque ad nostra tempora, jacuerat.*”) Now we know from inventories drawn up before the destruction of the Crucifix that it stood “behind the Main Altar” but “over the entrance to the vault” (see: M. CONWAY, *The Abbey of Saint Denis and its Ancient Treasures*, “Archaeologia,” vol. LXVI [2nd ser., vol. XVI], 1914/15, p. 114), that is to say, over the entrance to the new crypt enlarged by Suger. In other words, it stood in the center of the westernmost edge of Suger’s upper choir, and thus, in fact, directly above the old *confessio* where the relics had been kept up to June 14, 1144. This place was all the more fitting as it was directly in front of the *Altare Salvatoris et Sanctae Crucis* the location of which was already ascertained by L. LEVILLAIN, in: “Bulletin Monumental,” LXXI, 1907, p. 257, although he mistakenly identified its site with that of the altar of the Trinity (Fig 1, cross device). SUGER was therefore justified in saying that the Crucifix stood *eodem sane loco*, “on the very same spot,” where the relics had been kept until he himself had moved them (he could, of course, not know that Charlemagne’s church was not erected on the same site as Dagobert’s).

For the sake of convenience, SUGER’s writings will henceforth be quoted as “*Adm.*” for the *De rebus in administratione sua gestis*, and “*Cons.*” for the *De consecratione Ecclesiae Sancti Dionysii*, with “p.” referring to LECOY DE LA MARCHE’s edition, and “col.” to the edition in the *Patrologia*.

naves of almost equal width and height, the central one terminating in a semi-circular apse. Its floor was, roughly speaking, on the same level as that of the annular crypt, but its vault rose to a total height of approximately 4.75 meters instead of about three. Its upper surface was thus about 3.70 meters above the floor of the basilica's original nave and, consequently, about 1.70 meters above the tribune in the basilica's apse (Figs. 1 and 2,B).

Both Fulrad's crypt and Hilduin's annex were incorporated in the substructures of Suger's famous upper choir. Its floor was determined by, and was in fact identical with, the upper surface of Hilduin's chapel, and Crosby has convincingly shown what was done with Fulrad's crypt:<sup>4</sup> Suger put in a filling, about 1.70 meters thick, on top of it, thereby raising its upper surface to the level determined by the vaults of Hilduin's chapel, and creating a big, unified platform about 3.70 meters above the original pavement of the basilica (Fig. 2,C).

THAT THE UPPER SURFACE of Hilduin's chapel constituted the floor of the new choir is unequivocally stated in what is perhaps the best-known passage of Suger's *De Consecratione*.<sup>5</sup> But in other respects this very passage confronts the interpreter with a perplexing problem, and even Crosby has limited himself to calling it "somewhat confusing."

It is perfectly true that Suger's Latin is not always lucid. He writes in a spirit of self-justification—and, it must be admitted, self-glorification—rather than as an impartial chronicler; he indulges in a complicated sentence-structure which has a tendency to get out of hand, and he loves rare, sophisticated words and flowery metaphors. Yet, when he wants to convey precise technical information as to the work accomplished under his own supervision, his sentences are carefully and aptly worded<sup>6</sup> and must be interpreted *ad verbum*. We have no right to presume that he did not know what he meant, nor that he did not mean what

4. CROSBY, p. 147 s.

5. *Cons.*, p. 225; col. 1246, B.C. For previous interpretations see: CROSBY, p. 147, notes.

6. A case in point is the sentence directly following our "crucial passage" (reprinted and translated by CROSBY, p. 113 s.) in which SUGER proudly relates how the columns and central arches of his new choir were cleverly disposed in such a way that the central nave (*medium*) of the old church was "equalized" (*aequaretur*) with the central nave of the new addition, and that the "dimensions" (*quantitas*) of the old side-aisles were also "brought into harmony" (*adaptaretur*) with the "dimensions" of the new ones (*Provisum est etiam sagaciter, ut . . . geometricis et arithmeticiis instrumentis MEDIUM antiquae testudinis ecclesiae augmenti novi MEDIO aequaretur, nec minus antiquarum QUANTITAS alarum novarum QUANTITATI adaptaretur.*) It will be noted that the text is specific with respect to the side-aisles (of which it says that their "dimensions" were brought into harmony with those of the old ones), but that it is general with respect to the central nave (of which it says that it was equalized with the old one as a whole). The reason for this distinction is that the planning of the central nave presented a problem, not only with respect to the "dimensions" as determined by the distances from column to column, but also with respect to axial alignment; whereas, once the central nave had been laid out, the problem of the aisles was really only one of dimensioning. SUGER may have taken justifiable pride in the fact that he, with his "geometrical and arithmetical instruments," had solved the problem of axial alignment so much better than Hilduin (Fig. 1). The deliberately unspecified expression *medium* should therefore not be narrowed down to "*die BREITE des mittleren Teiles*" ("the WIDTH of the middle part") as has been done in the translation by E. GALL, *Die gotische Baukunst in Frankreich und Deutschland*, I, Leipzig, 1925, p. 98.



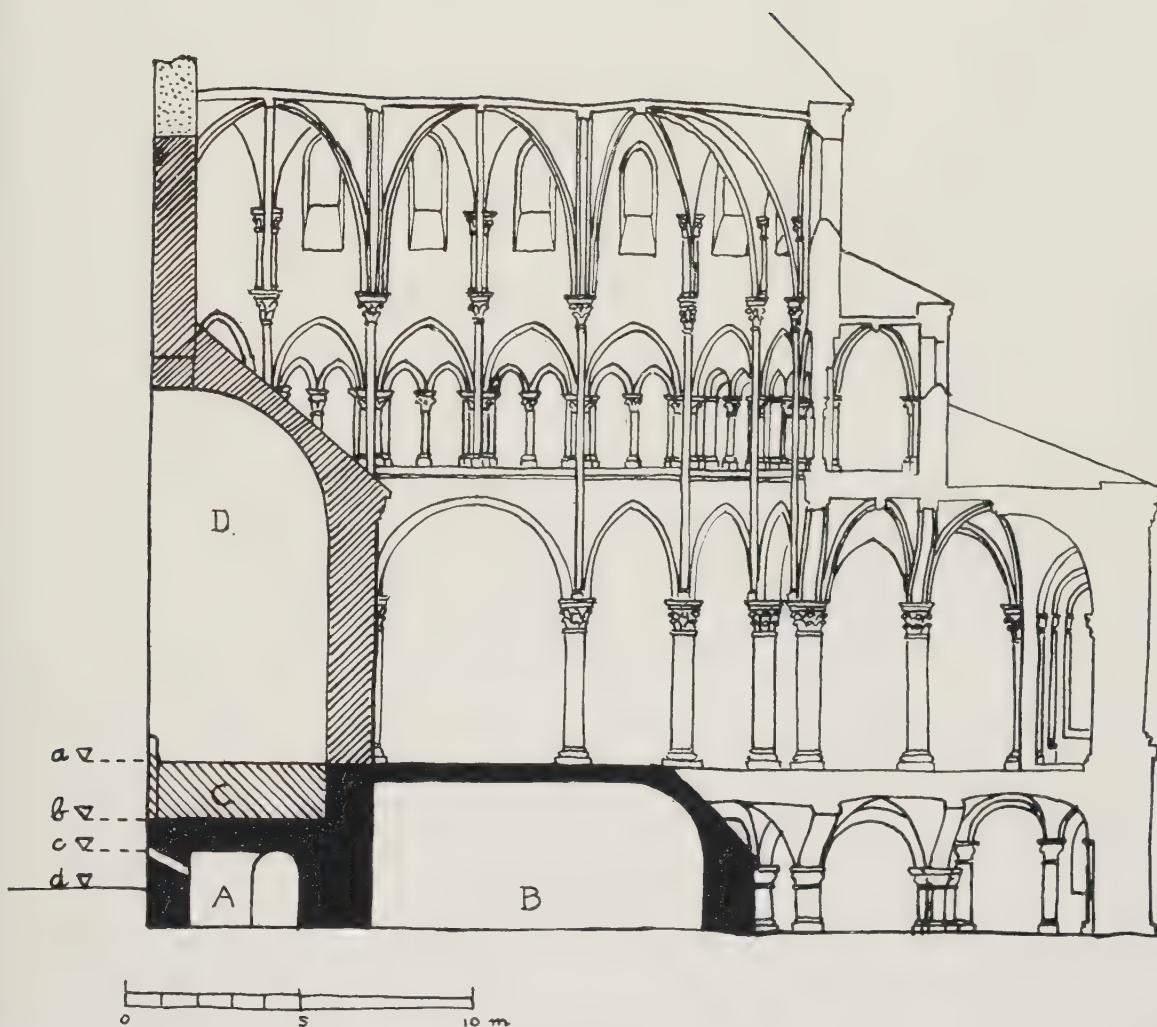


FIG. 2. — ST. DENIS, CHOIR. COMPARATIVE LONGITUDINAL SECTION (SKETCH), BASED ON CROSBY, FIGS. 36, 68, 86, 87, EXCEPT FOR THE DESTROYED PARTS OF SUGER'S CHOIR.

- Fulrad's Crypt (A) and Hilduin's Chapel (B).
- ▨ Fulrad's Apse (D) and East Wall of Fulrad's Crossing as far as Presumably Removed by Suger.
- ▤ Remainder of Fulrad's Crossing.
- ▧ Masonry Filled In by Suger (C).
- Suger's Choir (Tentative Approximation).

a: Floor Level of Suger's Choir.  
 b: Floor Level of Fulrad's Apse.  
 c: Floor Level of Present Nave.  
 d: Floor Level of Fulrad's Nave.

he said. Much less should we take the liberty of arbitrarily "emending" a text which is, on the whole, in very good condition.<sup>7</sup>

After having described the dedication of his new west structure in 1140, Suger goes on to say that the long-lasting and intolerable congestion around the Holy of Holies<sup>8</sup> had caused him to drop the work at the façade for the time being, and to concentrate on the enlargement of the church proper. In view of the legendary consecration of the old building by Christ Himself,<sup>9</sup> the ancient masonry was to be preserved as far as possible ("we wished . . . to respect the very stones, sacred as they are, as though they were relics").<sup>10</sup> But a new chevet was made inevitable by "the pressure of so urgent a need" and was to be "ennobled by the beauty of length and width" (" . . . *longitudinis et latitudinis pulchritudine inniteremur nobilitare*"). Then follows, immediately, the crucial passage which I shall juxtapose with a translation as faithful as possible:

*"Consulte siquidem decretum est illam alitori inaequalem, quae super absidem sanctorum dominorum nostrorum corpora retinentem operiebat, removeri voltam usque ad superficiem cryptae cui adhaere-*

*"Upon consideration, then, it was decided to remove that vault, unequal to the higher one, which, overhead, closed the apse containing the bodies of our patron saints, as far as to the upper surface of the*

7. Even passages apparently so obscure that the editors conjectured omissions or corruptions, can often be understood as transmitted. In describing the anxiety of the dignitaries to participate in the translation of the relics on June 11, 1944, for instance, SUGER says: ". . . *tot et tantae manus injiciuntur, quod nec etiam septima manus ipsa sancta scrinia attingere valeret*"—" . . . so many and so important hands were laid on that not even the seventh hand was able to reach the sacred shrines themselves" (*Cons.*, p. 236; col. 1252, A). The expression *septima manus* seems so puzzling that it was proposed to replace it by *sceptrigera manus* ("the scepter-bearing hand," meaning the hand of the King.) But *septima manus* is a medieval law term which makes quite good sense in SUGER's context. When taking an oath, the juror had to place his hand upon a sacred object, frequently relics (*jurare super sancta*), and so had his cojurors (*conjuratores, consacramentales*). When a man took the oath with one cojuror, he was thus said to swear *secunda manu*, and when with six, *septima manu* (see: DUCANGE, *Glossarium mediae et infimae Latinitatis*, s.v. "Juramentum," vol. IV, pp. 453 ss.). SUGER's puzzling phrase, then, may well allude to this ceremony; the space was so confined (the *loci angustia* is mentioned shortly before), and the onrush of those present so violent, that no seventh *consacramentalis*—so to speak—would have found it possible to lay his hand upon the relics. It may be added that SUGER, well versed in law, employed legal metaphors also in other places, for instance at the very beginning of *Cons.* The *iniciuntur* has been substituted for *mittuntur* on the evidence of the manuscripts; cf. "Art Bulletin," XXIX, June, 1947, (in print).

8. There is good textual evidence to show that the unintelligible phrase *circa Sanctorum*, questioned but not explained by all previous editors, has to be completed into *circa Sanctum Sanctorum*, the omission of a word nearly identical with one that follows being one of the most common clerical errors. For a fuller discussion of this emendation, cf. the writer's edition and translation of SUGER's writings on the Abbey Church of St. Denis (Princeton University Press, 1946, pp. 147, 220, 239).

9. Cf. CROSBY, p. 43.

10. In: GALL, *Op. cit.*, p. 97, the phrase "*ipsis sacrae lapidibus tanquam reliquiis deferremus*" is erroneously translated by ". . . *die geheiligten Steine selbst in den Neubau versetzen zu lassen*" ("to transfer the sacred stones themselves to the new building"); this confusion between the medieval *deferre* with dative (whence our "I defer to your advice") and the classical *deferre* with accusative practically reverses SUGER's meaning. The translation given in: A. KINGSLEY PORTER, *Medieval Architecture*, II, New Haven, 1942, pp. 195 ss. is, here as well as in other places, utterly fantastic.



*bat; ut eadem crypta superioritatem sui accedentibus per utrosque gradus pro pavimento offerret, et in eminentiori loco sanctorum lecticas auro et pretiosis gemmis adornatas adventantium obtutibus offerret."*

crypt to which it adhered; so that this crypt might offer its top as a pavement to those approaching by either of the two stairs, and might present the chasses of the Saints, adorned with gold and precious gems, to the visitors' glances in a more elevated place."

The second half of this long sentence, beginning with "*ut eadem . . .*," presents no difficulty. It describes what Suger wished to accomplish, and describes it not only clearly but also in full agreement with the archaeological facts. The top of Hilduin's chapel was, as has already been mentioned, employed as a pavement for a more spacious upper choir. This pavement was made accessible from the transept by flights of stairs on either side. The relics of the patron saints were moved from the annular crypt to the *rond point* of the new chevet; and there, placed in a sumptuous shrine with a new altar attached to it, they did indeed present themselves "in a more elevated place."

The "rub" is in the first half of the sentence, from "*Consulte siquidem . . .*" to "*. . . cui adhaerebat.*" It describes, not the purpose and result of Suger's operation but the operation itself, or at least its essential phase; and this description seems to be at variance with the available evidence.

The operation was concerned with a "vault" (*volta*), henceforth to be referred to as the "problem vault." The "problem vault," it is stated, was unequal to—that is to say, lower than—a higher one (*altiori inaequalis*) and, furthermore, adhered to (*adhaerebat*) a *crypta*. Since Suger constantly uses the expression *crypta* with reference to Hilduin's chapel, and since Hilduin's chapel is both higher than and adjacent to the annular crypt (Fig. 2,A), the vault of the latter seems to agree with the two specifications for the "problem vault" and is generally presumed to be identical with it.

So far as I know this identification has never been doubted; yet it implies that Suger would have described precisely the opposite of what actually happened. He says as clearly as words can express that the "problem vault" was "removed" (*removeri*). The vault of the annular crypt, however, was not removed at all. As Crosby has shown, it was even strengthened by a top filling 1.70 meters thick; and that it had remained intact throughout the building process is further confirmed by the fact that the relics of the patron saints had never left their original resting place until the very day of the Great Consecration, Sunday, June 11, 1144. Magnificent showman that he was, Suger had gone out of his way to dramatize

the translation of the relics to be displayed in the new chevet, while at the same time drawing a line between the patron saints who were to occupy the big new altar in the *rond-point*, and the humbler martyrs and confessors who were to be worshipped in the radiating chapels and in the crypt. The relics of these less distinguished worthies had been removed from their previous altars on the day preceding the consecration and had been placed in draped tents before the exit of the monk's choir. The "sacred ashes" of Saint Denis and his companions, however, had "never been moved from their place" until the very moment when King Louis VII and his retinue entered the crypt<sup>11</sup> and brought them up to be "met" by the other relics which were simultaneously carried in "on the shoulders of Bishops, counts and barons." Needless to say, the most sacred relics of the Abbey could not have been left in a chamber whose ceiling was being hacked away by a wrecking crew.

EVEN BEFORE it was established that nothing drastic was ever done to the vault of the annular crypt, the text had proved embarrassing to art historians. The "problem vault," it says, was removed "as far as to" (*usque ad*) the "upper surface" (*superficiem*) of Hilduin's chapel; and since this upper surface lies considerably above, and not below, the vault of the crypt, the latter, were it identical with the "problem vault," would have been removed from where it never was. This difficulty was overcome by what our statesmen call measures of expediency. A French scholar rendered the fateful word *removeri* by "*reporter au niveau de*" ("to transfer to the level of") and expanded the *superficies* into "*la partie supérieure*" ("the upper part").<sup>12</sup> A German translated it by "*höher zu legen*" ("to raise"),<sup>13</sup> and an American blandly replaced it, in his transcription of the Latin text, by *renovari* ("to renew").<sup>14</sup>

Such high-handed treatment of textual evidence is of course inadmissible. But the embarrassment which prompted it throws light on the crux of the whole matter. If the "problem vault" was removed *usque ad superficiem* of Hilduin's chapel it must have been higher, not lower, than the latter, in spite of the disturbing *altiori inaequalem* which will be explained very shortly. IN BRIEF, THE "PROBLEM VAULT" MUST BE IDENTIFIED, NOT WITH THE VAULT OF THE ANNULAR

11. *Cons.*, pp. 232 ss; col. 1250, G-1252, B. See in particular p. 234 (col. 1251, C): "*Ut autem pactis ordinarie sanctae consecrationis mysteriis ventum est ad sanctorum reliquiarum repositionem, ad sanctorum dominorum nostrorum antiquos et venerandos tumulos accessimus (NEQUE ADHUC DE LOCO SUO MOTA ERANT).*"

12. L. LEVILLAIN, *loc. cit.*, p. 238. Apart from this inaccuracy, LEVILLAIN's translation is by far the best of those which have come to my knowledge and may be reprinted as a control: "*On décida, après examen, que cette voûte, inégale à la plus haute, qui fermait, par-dessus, l'abside contenant les corps de nos saints, serait reportée au niveau de la partie supérieure de la crypte à laquelle elle adhérerait, afin que la même crypte offrît son extradors en guise de pavé à ceux qui accéderaient par les deux escaliers et désignât aux regards des arrivants, en un lieu plus élevé, les châsses ornées d'or et de pierres précieuses.*"

13. E. GALL, *Op. cit.*, p. 97.

14. A. KINGSLEY PORTER, *Op. cit.*, pp. 195, 197.



CRYPT BUT WITH THE APSE OF FULRAD'S BASILICA (Fig. 2,D).

Once suggested, this reinterpretation seems almost self-evident. Like the annular crypt, the Carolingian apse "adhered" to Hilduin's chapel. Unlike the annular crypt, however, it was in fact removed, and this, precisely as required by the text, *usque ad superficiem*—as we can now interpret, "all the way down to the upper surface"—of Hilduin's chapel. And it was by this very removal that Suger was enabled to do what he tells us he wanted to do: to make the top of Hilduin's chapel accessible from the interior; to convert it into a large platform on which the relics could be displayed *in eminentiori loco*; and to make room for a new upper choir "ennobled by the beauty of length and width." The tearing down of the old apse, and not the raising of its pavement, was the decisive step—the real "breakthrough" from constriction to spaciousness and from penumbral gloom to that "true," "new," wonderful" and "uninterrupted" light which was the dominating concept in Suger's esthetics and, if one may call it thus, philosophy.<sup>15</sup> Is not a man, who devotes only one paragraph to the greatest architectural enterprise of his life, more likely to record this strategic decision rather than the purely tactical operation of filling in a few tons of masonry?

However, two objections have to be met. First, can the word *volta* designate a whole apse—that is to say, the combination of a spherical vault with a cylindrical wall beneath it—instead of a vault pure and simple? Second, if so, with reference to what could this apse be called *altiori inaequalis*?

In order to answer the first of these objections, we have to consider the word *volta* in connection with the relative clause by which it is qualified and which reads "*quae super absidem sanctorum dominorum nostrorum corpora retinentem operiebat*" ("which, overhead, closed the apse containing the bodies of our patron saints). In this relative clause the word *super* is used, as it was, occasionally, even by Caesar and Virgil, as an equivalent of *insuper*, that is to say, as an adverb qualifying the *operiebat*;<sup>16</sup> we have accordingly translated it as "overhead." Now, if, as has been taken for granted thus far, the *absis* were identical with the annular crypt, and the *volta* with its vault—in other words, if the *volta* were nothing but the ceiling of the annular crypt—this adverbial qualification would be superfluous. Every ceiling is, by definition, "overhead" in relation to the room to which it belongs; the *super* makes sense only if it is meant to indicate that the "problem vault" was "overhead" in relation to something else. What Suger here calls *absis* can therefore not be identified with the annular crypt; for then the *super* would be meaningless. But neither can it be identified with what may be termed as "apse in the narrower sense," viz., the big niche or *exedra* visible from and communicat-

15. See below, p. 105ff.

16. It would not be necessary to stress this, had not the *super* been construed as a preposition, governing *absidem*, by KINGSLEY PORTER, and entirely neglected by GALL.

ing with the interior of the church; for this big niche or *exedra* did not contain the relics of the patron saints. *Absis* must thus denote, as it so often does, the chevet or sanctuary as a whole.<sup>17</sup> This sanctuary could very well be said to have "contained" the relics (which were in its crypt); and it could also be said to have been closed, "overhead," by a *volta*—provided that this term here denotes the upper portion of the sanctuary as distinguished from the rest. *Volta*, then, is here indeed synonymous with *exedra* or "apse in the narrower sense"; and this conforms, not only to medieval terminology in general but also to Suger's personal usage in particular. In no less authoritative a writer than Durandus we read: "*Exedra est absida SIVE VOLTA quaedam separata modicum a templo vel palatio.*"<sup>18</sup> ("The *exedra* is an apse or kind of vault, somewhat separated from the temple or palace"); and when Suger tells about his plan to move the sacred relics to the apse of his new upper choir he refers to this apse simply as *volta superior*: "*Quia igitur sacratissima dominorum nostrorum corpora in VOLTA SUPERIORE quam nobilius potuimus locari oportuit . . .*"<sup>19</sup> ("Since it seemed fitting to display the most sacred bodies of our patrons in the UPPER VAULT as nobly as we could. . . .") This expression, *volta superior*, is a conclusive parallel to our *volta . . . quae super absidem . . . operiebat*. If Suger could apply the abbreviated and somewhat old-fashioned expression *volta*<sup>20</sup> to the elaborate apse of his own chevet he could apply it, with even greater justification, to the plain apse of Fulrad's church.

In an attempt to meet the other objection we must bear in mind that Suger wrote, not as an historian of architecture poring over a longitudinal section, but as an abbot living with, and practically in, his church. As we remember, our passage is directly preceded by a brief outline of the whole building program, ending with the phrase ". . . to ennoble the new structure by the beauty of length and width" ("*. . . illam quae . . . novitas inchoaretur, longitudinis et latitudinis pulchritudine inniteremur nobilitare.*") This sentence mentions only the

17. See: DUCANGE, *Op. cit.*, s.v. "Absida," vol. I, p. 32. The same ambiguity obtains in English (and, for that matter, in all other modern languages). We, too, use the word "apse" either with a concave or with a convex form in mind. On the one hand, it denotes the *exedra* or "apse in the narrower sense" which forms an integral part of the interior, in which case the term "apse" does not include the crypt; on the other, it denotes the sanctuary as a whole, that is to say, the entire structural unit which juts from the nave or transept, in which case the term "apse" comprises the crypt as well as the "apse in the narrower sense."

18. GULIELMI DURANTIS *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, I, 1, 19, referred to in DUCANGE, *Op. cit.*, s.v. "Absida" (see preceding note) and s.v. "Volutio," vol. VIII, p. 377. In the English translation by J. M. NEALE AND B. WEBB (*The Symbolism of Churches and Church Furniture*, London, 1893, p. 22) the equivalents of *sive volta quaedam* are unaccountably omitted.

19. *Adm.*, XXXI, p. 193; col. 1231, B. It should also be noted that SUGER, when stating that the whole chevet was completed in the surprisingly short—and symbolically significant!—period of three years and three months, contrasts the *inferior crypta* with the *superior voltarum sublimitas*, thereby reserving the word *volta* for the upper choir although the crypt was vaulted as well (*Adm.*, XXVIII, p. 190; col. 1229, C).

20. The synonymy of *volta* with *absis* (or *absida*) and *exedra* may be accounted for by the fact that in practically all pre-Romanesque and most early Romanesque basilicas the apse was the only portion above ground to be vaulted.

dimensions of length and width. But when writing on, and coming to the statement that the old apse had been torn down in order to make room for the new upper choir, Suger could not help remembering that this new upper choir was not only longer and wider but also higher than the old apse had been; or, to put it the other way, that the old apse had been lower than the one he had built. It is this idea which is conveyed—as an afterthought in parentheses, so to speak—by the *altiori inaequalem*. When mentioning the *volta* which had been removed—meaning, as we now know, the apse of Fulrad's church—Suger saw fit to add that it had been “unequal to the higher one,” not in comparison with any “vault” existing before he began to build, but in comparison with his own new upper choir which was uppermost in his mind at the time of his writing, and the apse of which, as has been shown, was also a *volta* according to his vocabulary.

The expression *volta altiori inaequalis* thus means, very simply: “the apse that had been lower than the present one.” Writing as he did with the present as well as the past in mind, Suger could speak of the old, no longer existing, apse as “the lower one” much as we might when showing our newly enlarged library to a friend. “Of course,” we might say, “the lower ceiling had to come out to make room for the shelves.” And why, it may be asked, did Suger use so curiously oblique an expression as *altiori inaequalis*, “unequal to the higher one,” if he simply meant “lower?” The answer to this is that, strange though it seems, the Latin language did not offer him much choice. *Inferior* would refer to relative location rather than to relative height; *brevior* would denote a shallower apse rather than a lower one; *depressior* would aim at the shape of the dome rather than at the dimensions of the whole unit; and *minus alta* would mean “not very high” or “not quite high enough” rather than “less high.” It is almost ironic that a writer always so fond of circumlocution had to resort to it, for once, out of sheer necessity.

AFTER HAVING GIVEN a literal translation of our passage and having spent some honest High School work on its analysis, we may feel free to paraphrase its meaning in more understandable language: “It was decided to remove the apse which formed the upper part of the sanctuary wherein were kept [*scil.*, in the crypt] the relics of our patron saints. This apse, lower than the present one, was removed all the way down to the top surface of the sunken chapel to which it was attached.”

—II—

SUGER'S DESCRIPTION of his new chevet culminates in the praise of what was indeed its most glorious feature: the ambulatory circled with radiating chapels “by virtue of which the whole [church] would shine with the wonderful and



uninterrupted light of most luminous windows, pervading the interior beauty" ("... *quo tota [scil., ecclesia] clarissimarum vitrearum luce mirabili et continua interiorem perlustrante pulchritudinem eniteret.*")<sup>21</sup>

Taken by itself, this sentence describes what we are in the habit of calling a purely "esthetic" experience. In contrast with the opaque wall of the Carolingian apse, the translucent windows of the Gothic chevet—two in each chapel, unobstructed by radial partitions,<sup>22</sup> and separated from each other by a bare minimum of masonry—indeed admitted an "uninterrupted" light which, especially after the remodelling of the transept, would "pervade the interior beauty" (Fig. 3). But the sensitive ear will perceive overtones—overtones recalling the language of the liturgy, the language of Early Christian *tituli*, and the language of Plotinus and Proclus. *Lux continua* certainly means a light "uninterrupted" by physical obstruction, but it can also mean a light "unbroken," "unremitting" and "unending"—the light divine as opposed to the light of day. *Interior pulchritudo* certainly means "the beauty of the interior," but it can also be translated as "interior beauty," thereby evoking the idea of an "inner," spiritual beauty as distinguished from outward appearance.

These overtones become more clearly discernible in the metrical inscription commemorating the consecration of the new chevet and describing its effect upon the rest of the church once the operation of joining the two would be completed:

*"Pars nova posterior, dum  
jungitur anteriori,  
Aula micat medio clarifi-  
cata suo.  
Claret enim clavis quod  
clare concupulatur,  
Et quod perfundit lux no-  
va claret opus  
Nobile..."*<sup>23</sup>

"Once the new rear part [*scil.*, the new chevet] is joined to the part in front,

The church shines with its middle part brightened.

For bright is that which is brightly coupled with the bright,

And bright is the noble edifice which is pervaded by the new light..."

Literally interpreted, these verses are nothing but a poetic amplification of what is stated in prose in the passage just quoted: the new, transparent chevet would "brighten" the entire church as soon as the latter's "middle part" would have been remodelled, and the whole would be pervaded by a more brilliant light. But again, and even more compellingly, the words seem to demand another, esoteric interpretation; they seem to be deliberately chosen so as to be intelligible

21. *Cons.*, p. 225; col. 1246,C. The *clarissimarum* has been substituted for *sacratissimarum* on the evidence of the manuscripts (cf. note 7).

22. Cf. H. JANTZEN, *Ueber den gotischen Kirchenraum* ("Freiburger Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft," Heft 15), Freiburg, 1928, p. 20.

23. *Adm.*, XXVIII, p. 190; col. 1229,D.



FIG. 3. — ST. DENIS CHOIR, INTERIOR.



on two different levels of meaning. Of course, the formula *lux nova* makes perfect sense with reference to the improvement of the actual lighting conditions brought about by the "new" architecture; but it can hardly be an accident—especially with an author whose mind revolved around the typological correspondence between the events and symbols of the era "*sub lege*" and the era "*sub gratia*"—<sup>24</sup> that it also recalls the light of the New Testament. And the insistent play upon the words *clarere*, *clarus* and *clarificare* almost hypnotizes the mind into a search for a significance hidden beneath their purely perceptual implications.

This search is rewarded by the inscription on the west doors, the reliefs of which showed the *Passion* and the *Resurrection* or *Ascension* of Christ:

"Portarum quisquis attol-  
re quaeris honorem,  
Aurum nec sumptus, operis mi-  
rare laborem.  
Nobile claret opus, sed opus  
quod nobile claret  
Clarificet mentes, ut eant  
per lumina vera  
Ad verum lumen, ubi Christus  
janua vera.  
Quale sit intus in his de-  
terminat aurea porta:  
Mens hebes ad verum per ma-  
terialia surgit,  
Et demersa prius hac visa  
luce resurgit."<sup>25</sup>

"Whoever thou art, if thou  
seekest to extol the honor of these  
doors,

Marvel not at the gold and the  
expense but at the craftsmanship  
of the work.

Bright is the noble work; but,  
being nobly bright, the work

Should brighten the minds so  
that they may travel, through the  
true lights,

To the True Light where  
Christ is the true door.

In what manner it [*scil.*, the  
True Light] be inherent in this  
world the golden door defines:

The dull mind rises to truth  
through that which is material

And, in seeing this light, is  
resurrected from its former sub-  
mersion."

24. See the iconography of his stained-glass windows, of his Golden Crucifix, and of the new rear panel which he provided for the Main Altar (*Adm.*, XXXII, p. 196 and col. 1232,C; XXXIII, p. 198 and col. 1233,C; XXXIV, pp. 204 ss. and col. 1237, B-D).

25. *Adm.*, XXVII, p. 189; col. 1229,A. The phrase *ubi Christus janua vera* is, of course, a quotation from *John*, X,9. The sixth line admits of no less than five different translations all of which make sense. I have made my choice, not only because the translation here proposed seems to be the best in view of what precedes and follows, but also for metrical reasons, the caesura suggesting a connection between *in his* and *intus* rather than between *in his* and *determinat*. The translation of *in his* as "in this world" is based on good Ciceronian usage. As an alternative, it may be suggested that the *his* refers back to the *lumina vera*, here meaning the door reliefs, in which case the translation would read: "In what manner it [the True Light] be inherent in these [true lights] . . ." This would substitute one specific visible object for the visible world in general but would not change the meaning in principle.



Here, finally, Suger explicitly reveals that, for him, every word that matters has a twofold significance. He describes the resplendent doors, *fusiles et deauratas*, as "being bright" (*clarere*), and even calls them "lights" (*lumina*), in a purely perceptual sense. But he goes on to say that this physical "brightness" will "brighten" (*clarificare*) the mind of the spectator by a spiritual illumination so that it may travel through those terrestrial or visible "lights" to the "True Light" of Heaven; for, only through that which is material can our "dull" mind "ascend" (*surgit*) to the eternal Truth and thereby experience a "resurrection" (*resurgit*) from matter comparable to the *Resurrectio vel Ascensio* which was depicted in the last of the reliefs.

Every significant WORD, then, refers manifestly to a sensory or "esthetic" experience and esoterically to a religious or "metaphysical" concept; and this because every perceptible THING is thought of as a symbol of and guide to an intelligible truth: the objects themselves, too, are invested with an esoteric as well as with a manifest meaning.

The principle which underlies this very sophisticated poetry is called by Suger the "anagogical [that is, the upward-leading] method," *anagogicus mos*. "Sometimes," he says, "when—out of my delight in the beauty of the house of God—the loveliness of the many-colored gems has called me away from external cares, and worthy meditation has induced me to reflect, transferring that which is material to that which is immaterial, on the diversity of the sacred virtues: then it seems to me that I see myself dwelling, as it were, in some strange region of the universe which neither exists entirely in the slime of the earth nor entirely in the purity of Heaven; and that, by the grace of God, I can be transported from this inferior to that higher world in an anagogical manner."<sup>26</sup>

Here Suger describes a kind of quiet mental ecstasy induced by deep absorption in the beauty of the precious stones which adorned the Cross of St. Eloy and the *Escrin de Charlemagne*, and which to his delight corresponded, with only one exception, to those enumerated in Ezekiel, XXVIII, 13. "Anagogically"—we shall soon see whence he appropriated this term—the manifold "virtues" of these sards, topazes, jaspers, chrysolites, etc. (as we would say, their properties and reputed magical and medicinal powers) guided his mind to a contemplation of the equally manifold "virtues" in a spiritual sense; and they thereby transported him from the material world to what Plato had called the "supercelestial realm."

26. *Adm.*, XXXII, p. 198; col. 1233,D-1234,A: "Unde cum ex dilectione decoris domus Dei aliquando multicolor gemmarum speciositas ab extrinsecis me curis devocaret, sanctarum etiam diversitatem virtutum, de materialibus ad immaterialia transferendo, honesta meditatio insistere persuaderet, videor videre me quasi sub aliqua extranea orbis terrarum plaga, quae nec tota sit in terrarum faece nec tota in coeli puritate, demorari, ab hac etiam inferiori ad illam superiorem anagogico modo Deo donante posse transferri." The translation in: A. KINGSLEY PORTER, *Op. cit.*, p. 252 is not only arbitrary grammatically but also misleading in principle, in that the whole passage is related to the architecture of the church instead of to the precious stones in some of its furnishings.

THE IDEA of such a spiritual ascent holds in fact an important position in the thought of Plato; and it holds the all-important position in the systems of his followers, the neo-Platonics. But Suger accepts—and, if we may say so, practises—that particular version of Platonism which is known as “light metaphysics.” For him, as we have seen, light was both the vehicle and the goal of a rise from matter to the “purity of Heaven”: the vehicle, in that he thought of light as the natural light admitted by windows, emanating—or seeming to emanate—from such luminous bodies as gold reliefs or precious stones, and reflected by every visible thing; the goal, in that he thought of light as the *verum lumen* which is the light of God.

Neo-Platonic light metaphysics was one of the dominant forces in Jewish as well as Christian mysticism; in more or less diluted form it helped to shape the language of Gothic vernacular poetry; and by way of a memorable metamorphosis it was to inspire Robert Grosseteste's and Roger Bacon's attempts at a purely quantitative interpretation of nature. But it had, characteristically, not many adherents in the XII Century,<sup>27</sup> and Suger would have deserved to be mentioned among these few. How can one account for this almost anachronistic enthusiasm in a great abbot, administrator and statesman otherwise innocent of philosophical, let alone mystical leanings? First, Suger was always on the defense against those who, like his dreaded friend St. Bernard, condemned material splendor in the Christian church, and he would naturally welcome a metaphysical justification of his inborn love for gold, enamel, precious stones, stained glass and the “old-fashioned” glitter of mosaics.<sup>28</sup> Second, and no less important, in accepting and professing the doctrines of light metaphysics he believed that he was paying homage to the very patron saint of his Abbey.

The Christian version of light metaphysics was based on the writings of one man, or rather on the Latin translations of and the Latin commentaries upon these writings; and this one man—an anonymous follower of Proclus—was held to be none other than Dionysius the Areopagite who in turn had been identified with Saint Denis, the martyred first Bishop of Paris. It was the Abbey of St. Denis which owned the precious Greek manuscript of “Dionysius's” writings, deposited there by Louis the Pious who had received it from the Byzantine Emperor Michael the Stammerer; it was in St. Denis, and at the request of Louis's son, Charles the Bald, that—after the earlier and apparently not very successful at-

27. See: C. BAEUMKER, *Witelo*, in: “Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters,” III, 2, Munich, 1908, particularly pp. 379 ss. For GROSSETESTE, cf. L. BAUR, *Die philosophischen Werke des Robert Grosseteste*, *ibidem*, IX, 1912, and *Die Philosophie des Robert Grosseteste*, *ibidem*, XVIII, 1917, pp. 4-6. For epithets denoting luminosity in Gothic literature, cf. G. WEISE, *Die geistige Welt der Gotik . . .*, Halle, 1939, pp. 111 ss., 213 ss., 447 ss.

28. See the long apology directly following the passage just quoted (*Adm.*, XXXII, p. 198 s.; col. 1234, B-D). For the mosaic installed *novum contra usum* see *Adm.*, XXVII, p. 189; col. 1228, D.

tempt of Abbot Hilduin—Johannes Scottus Eriugena, known as John the Scot, had composed the translations and commentaries by means of which the thought of "Dionysius" took roots in the Western world.<sup>29</sup> If Suger ever read a book besides the Bible, the Latin Fathers, the classics, and the chroniclers, it must have been these translations and commentaries. They are in fact the direct source of his "anagogical" efforts.

At the very beginning of "Dionysius's" major work, the *De Caelesti Hierarchia*,—and, consequently, at the very beginning of Eriugena's Commentary—<sup>30</sup> the "anagogical" method (expressly so called both by the Pseudo-Areopagite and John the Scot) is explained and justified. Our mind can rise to that which is immaterial only "under the manual guidance" of that which is accessible to the senses (*materiali manu ductione*);<sup>31</sup> even to the prophets, the Godhead and the celestial virtues (the same *sanctae virtutes* which appeared to Suger in his precious stones!) could appear only in the guise of some visible form.<sup>32</sup> But this is possible because every visible thing, produced by man or nature, is in reality a "light" (*lumen*). These "little material lights" of which the "big light" of the universe is composed as of so many lanterns ("*Hinc est quod universalis hujus mundi fabrica maximum lumen fit, ex multis partibus veluti ex multis lucernis compactum*")<sup>33</sup> are "images" or, in fact, "rays" of the *vera lux*<sup>34</sup> proceeding from the "Father of the lights" (*Pater luminum*) Whose first emanation is the *lumen verum*: Christ, the Word.<sup>35</sup>

If someone should object that the term "light" ought to be restricted to intellectual and rational substances, Eriugena's answer is that the whole material universe is conceived so as to serve for our "enlightenment" or "illumination": "Every creature, visible or invisible, is a light (*lumen*) brought into being by the Father of the lights (*Pater luminum*). . . This stone or that piece of wood

29. See: CROSBY, p. 166 s. Furthermore A. M. FRIEND, JR., *Carolingian Art in the Abbey of St. Denis*, "Art Studies," I, 1923, pp. 67 ss., and *idem*, *Two Manuscripts of the School of St. Denis*, in: "Speculum," I, 1926, p. 59 ss. For medieval translations subsequent to that of ERIUGENA see: M. GRABMANN, *Die mittelalterlichen lateinischen Uebersetzungen der Schriften des Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita*, in: "Festgabe Albert Ehrhard," Bonn and Leipzig, 1922, pp. 180 ss. (reprinted in *idem*, *Mittelalterliches Geistesleben*, Munich, 1926, pp. 449 ss.). While SUGER and HUGH OF ST-VICTOR (*Patrologia Latina*, vol. 175, col. 923 ss.) still depended on ERIUGENA's translation, ALBERT THE GREAT and THOMAS AQUINAS used a more recent one completed between 1162 and 1169 by JOHANNES SARRACENUS (JEAN SARAZIN). ROBERT GROSSETESTE apparently made a translation of his own.

30. *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 122 (henceforth to be quoted as *Eriugena*), col. 1037 s. (text) and col. 125 s. (commentary).

31. *Eriugena*, col. 1039,A (text) and col. 138,B (commentary); Latin text quoted below, p. 114.

32. *Eriugena*, col. 136,A (commentary).

33. *Eriugena*, col. 129,D (commentary).

34. *Eriugena*, col. 139,B (commentary); Latin text quoted below, p. 114.

35. *Eriugena*, col. 128,B (commentary): "*Pater autem luminum est Pater caelestis, lumen primum atque intimum, a quo lumen verum, Verbum suum . . . unigenitus Filius suus, nascitur.*"



is a light to me. . . . For, I perceive that it is good and beautiful; that it conforms to its proper rule of proportion; that it differs in kind and species from other kinds and species; that it is defined by its number, by virtue of which it is one thing; that it does not transgress its order; that it seeks its place according to its specific gravity. As I perceive such and similar things in this stone, they become lights (*lumina*) to me, that is to say, they enlighten me (*me illuminant*). For, I begin to think whence the stone is endowed with such properties . . . ; and soon, under the guidance of reason, I am led through all things to that cause of all things which endows them all with place and order, with number, species and kind, with goodness and beauty and essence, and with all other grants and gifts."<sup>36</sup>

"Goodness and beauty and essence!" All Platonists agree that these are merely aspects of the fundamental "One," and Plotinus had already thundered against those who defined physical beauty as a mere "proportional harmony of parts coupled with an agreeable color," thereby depriving it of its metaphysical significance.<sup>37</sup> But it remained for "Dionysius" to claim that this "One"—that is, from the point of view of a Christian, God—was nothing but an "invisible Light" or even an "invisible Sun;" and that, therefore, all its self-realizations, from the goodness, beauty and essence of Christ down to the goodness, beauty and essence of the lowliest creature, could be conceived as a kind of "splendor" or "radiance."

Eriugena is careful to account for the principles which guided him as the translator of a difficult text. He explicitly states which Latin word he thought most suitable to render the various Greek expressions for this splendor or radiance. And his choice fell, perhaps in recollection of *Revelation* XXI, 11, on the word *claritas*.<sup>38</sup> *Claritas* can stand for that φωτοδοσία ("light-giving") which expresses the first emanation of the "superessential Light" when it appears in the form of the Word or the Son "*qui Patrem clarificavit mundo*;" but *claritas* can also stand for that ἀγλαΐα ("radiance") which, according to "Dionysius", is the second and more important criterion of the beautiful: "*Superessentiale autem bonum pulchrum quidem dicitur . . . velut omnium bene compactionis et CLARITATIS causale . . .*" ("The super-essential good is called beauty . . . inasmuch as it is the

36. Eriugena, col. 128,C-129,C (commentary).

37. *Enneades*, I, 6, 1. The definition attacked by PLOTINUS was, as he rightly remarks, the "almost universally accepted" one. To the Middle Ages it was chiefly transmitted by ST. AUGUSTINE, *De civitate Dei*, XXII, 19 ("*Omnis enim corporis pulchritudo est partium congruentia cum quadam coloris suavitate*,") which formula is in turn based on: CICERO, *Tusculanae disputationes*, IV, 13 ("*. . . corporis est quaedam apta figura membrorum cum quadam coloris suavitate, eaque dicitur pulchritudo*.")

38. Eriugena, col. 133,C-134,A (commentary). For the passage from *Revelation* and the concept of *claritas* in connection with the appreciation of precious stones, cf. the excellent article by W. S. HECKSCHER, *Relics of Pagan Antiquity in Mediaeval Settings*, in: "Journal of the Warburg Institute," I, 1938, pp. 204 ss.

cause of the harmony and radiance of all things . . .")<sup>39</sup>

It appears, then, that Suger owes to "Dionysius", or rather to Eriugena's translations and commentaries, not only the method and content of his "anagogical" efforts but also—quite apart from the term *anagogicus mos* as such—much of their very phraseology. Eriugena's emphasis on the word *claritas*—and particularly its appearance in a definition of beauty so influential that even the arch-enemy of light metaphysics, Thomas Aquinas, included the concept, though not the implications, of *claritas* in his esthetic theory—<sup>40</sup>accounts for Suger's obses-

39. *Eriugena*, col. 1132, B (*De divinis nominibus*, IV, 7; text). This is the famous passage on which so much neo-Platonic speculation on beauty is based: τὸ δὲ ὑπερούσιον καλὸν κάλλος, μὲν λέγεται . . . ὡς τῆς πάντων εὐαρμοστίας καὶ ἀγλαίας αἰτίον (*Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 3, col. 701, C). It should be noted that the term *claritas* for ἀγλαία was retained by JOHANNES SARRACENUS although he changed ERIUGENA's *superessentiale bonum* to *supersubstantiale pulchrum* and substituted *universorum consonantia* for *omnium bene compactio* (see: *S. Thomae Aquinatis Opuscula Omnia* [P. MANDONNET, ed.], vol. II, Paris, 1927, p. 360). It was not until the Renaissance that the "medieval" term *claritas* fell: MARSILIO FICINO renders εὐαρμοστίας καὶ ἀγλαίας by "concinnitatis nitorisque" (*Opera Omnia*, Basel, 1576, vol. II, p. 1060), and B. CORDIER's translation—reprinted in the *Patrologia Graeca*—has *pulchritudinis et venustatis*, which makes "Dionysius" seem guilty of a *definitio per definiendum*. For the epithets *klâr* and *cler* in German and French poetry, see: G. WEISE, quoted in note 27.

40. For THOMAS AQUINAS, who considered light not as a substance but as a mere quality and did his best to make a sharp distinction between the beautiful and the good (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, I, qu. IV, art. 5, discussed by the writer in: "Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft," I, 1924, p. 257 ss.), light metaphysics was something *factitium et derisibile* (see: C. BAEUMKER, *Op. cit.*, p. 455 ss.), and when he made the concession of including "DIONYSIUS"-ERIUGENA's *claritas* in his definition of beauty (in *Summ. Theol.* I, IV, 5 he defines it as *debita proportio* pure and simple) he was careful to divest the term of its mystical implications. Even in his *Expositio super Dionysium*, *De divinis nominibus*, where he comments upon the basic text itself, he introduces a sharp distinction between the *pulchritudo spiritus* and the *pulchritudo corporis*, and therefore also between a *claritas spiritualis* and a *claritas corporalis*, and he then defines the latter as nothing but "a bright and shining color:" ". . . hominem pulchrum dicimus propter decentem proportionem membrorum in quantitate et situ, et propter hoc quod habet CLARUM ET NITIDUM COLOREM" (*Expos. super Dionys.*, lectio V, MANDONNET, *Op. cit.*, p. 362 s; it is with these qualifications in mind that the sentence in lectio VI, MANDONNET, p. 368, should be read, which says "*Claritas autem est de ratione pulchritudinis, ut dictum est*"). As far as applied to physical beauty, *claritas* has thus ceased to be a mysterious "radiance" of the light divine and has become a purely perceptual quality. And this interpretation is retained and developed in the two passages in the *Summa Theologiae* in which THOMAS AQUINAS defines beauty, not as a commentator but within the context of his own system. In the first passage (I, qu. XXXIX, art. 8) he says that beauty presupposes three things: "first, wholeness or perfection, for whatever is impaired [*scil.*, crippled or, in the case of an artifact, damaged] is ugly by this very fact; second, appropriate proportion or consonance; third, brightness, for that which has a shining color is said to be beautiful" ("*Primo quidem integritas sive perfectio: quae enim diminuta sunt, hoc ipso turpia sunt. Et debita proportio sive consonantia. Et iterum claritas; unda quae habent COLOREM NITIDUM, pulchra esse dicuntur*"). In the second passage (II, 2, qu. CXLV, art. 2, with a direct reference to "DIONYSIUS," he repeats that the *pulchritudo corporis* consists of a person's having "well-proportioned limbs in addition to a certain appropriate brightness of color" ("*membra bene proportionata cum quadam debita COLORIS CLARITATE*"), and goes on to say that, similarly, the *pulchritudo spiritualis* consists of the fact that a person's way of life and actions "be well proportioned according to the spiritual brightness of reason" ("*Quod conversatio hominis, sive actio ejus, sit bene proportionata secundum spiritualem rationis claritatem*"). In THOMAS AQUINAS's philosophy, then, the concept of *claritas* has lost, if we may say so, its metaphysical halo. As a criterion of "spiritual beauty," it amounts to nothing more sublime and mysterious than rationality; as a criterion of "physical beauty," it amounts to nothing more sublime and mysterious than a vivid color (it is significant that several manuscripts both of the *Expositio super Dionysium* and the *Summa Theologiae* have *vividum* instead of *nitidum*). In other words, while accepting the neo-Platonic term, THOMAS AQUINAS has managed to change its meaning to such an extent that it fits in with the very definition rejected by the father of neo-Platonism. In the end his *quaedam debita coloris CLARITAS* is not much more than CICERO's and ST. AUGUSTINE's *quaedam coloris SUAVITAS* (see the formulae adduced in note 37), except for a higher degree of vivacity. Concerning THOMAS AQUINAS's definition of beauty, the writer thus regrets to disagree—setting aside a number of less distinguished authorities—with J. MARITAIN, *Art and Scholasticism* (J. F. SCANLAN, transl.), London, 1930, p. 24 s., all the more so because the somewhat more "luministic" definition of beauty as *SPLENDOR FORMAE substantialis vel accidentalis super partes materiae proportionatas et terminatas* certainly belongs to ALBERT THE GREAT.

sion with the words *clarere*, *clarus* and *clarificare*. Suger's "*Mens hebes ad verum per materialia surgit*," is nothing but a metrical condensation of "Dionysius"-Eriugena's sentence: ". . . *impossibile est nostro animo ad immaterialem ascendere caelestium hierarchiarum et imitationem et contemplationem nisi ea, quae secundum ipsum est, materiali manuductione utatur*."<sup>41</sup> And it is from phrases such as: "*Materialia lumina, sive quae naturaliter in caelestibus spatiis ordinata sunt, sive quae in terris humano artificio efficiuntur, imagines sunt intelligibilium luminum, super omnia ipsius verae lucis*"<sup>42</sup> that the lines ". . . *ut eant per lumina vera Ad verum lumen . . .*"<sup>43</sup> are derived.

Fall 1943.

ERWIN PANOFSKY.



41. See note 31. The relative clause *quae secundum ipsum est* ("which is commensurate to it") qualifies the human mind as something incapable of purely intellectual cognition and thus corresponds to SUGER's *hebes*.

42. See note 34.

43. The influence of the Early Christian *tituli*, which reflect Christian neo-Platonism as a still living force, was brought to the writer's attention by DR. MEYER SCHAPIRO. He pointed out, specifically, the parallel between the line "*Aula micat medio clarificata suo*" and the *titulus* of the mosaic in SS. Cosma e Damiano:

"*AULA Dei claris radiat speciosa metallis,*

*In qua plus fidei lux speciosa MICAT.*"

(J. WILPERT, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten . . .*, text vol. I, part 2, Freiburg, 1916, p. 1072).

AUTHOR'S NOTE. The destroyed parts of Suger's choir as represented in Fig. 2 are a joint fantasy, largely based upon the material published by CROSBY, of the author and his friend PAUL FRANKL who was kind enough to execute the sketch here reproduced. The drawing reproduced in Fig. 1, likewise largely based upon CROSBY, was executed by MR. D. J. ANDERSON. The author also wishes to mention that this article was submitted in the fall of 1943 and that its publication should have preceded, rather than followed, his SUGER edition (quoted in note 8).





# NEW EXCAVATIONS IN THE ABBHEY CHURCH OF SAINT DENIS

THE excavations opened at St. Denis between June 25 and August 10, 1946, would have interested and pleased Henri Focillon. He was convinced that the problem of St. Denis could be solved and it was due to his enthusiastic encouragement and determined assistance that the first excavations were undertaken in 1938 and 1939. These new excavations vindicated his confidence for they confirmed much that was discovered in 1939.<sup>1</sup> But he would have been more pleased with the

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1. The results of these first excavations, in so far as they relate to the pre-XII Century buildings, have been described in my first volume, *The Abbey of St. Denis*, I, pp. 475-1122, Yale University Press, 1942.

unexpected proof that Suger's church in the XII Century was a predecessor not only of the great "northern" gothic cathedrals through the precocious integration of choir, ambulatory and radiating chapels — a fact which has long been recognized — but was also a predecessor of the more elusive "southern" cathedrals of the type of Bourges. In Focillon's opinion Bourges was the most interesting of the high Gothic cathedrals. It represented to him the inventiveness, and therefore the vitality, of a style which reached a climax in the classic type of Amiens and yet was capable within the same vocabulary of creating simultaneously a distinctly original solution to the identical problem.

It was the same inventive spirit, shown by Suger's architect, that interested Focillon in St. Denis. He argued that the mind capable of envisaging and constructing the daring innovations in the double ambulatories and radiating chapels of the chevet would likewise have produced an original solution for the transept and nave. This premise is correct for there is now incontrovertible evidence that the transept at St. Denis did not project beyond the walls of the nave, and there is also sufficient proof to reconstruct the nave with double side-aisles. These portions of the Abbey church consequently closely resemble the original plan of Notre Dame in Paris, which is generally accepted as one of the prototypes for the Cathedral of Bourges. What Focillon and no one else suspected was that Suger's church was never finished, although construction of the transept and entire nave was begun before the rebuilding of these portions by Pierre de Montreuil in the XIII Century.

The excavations in 1939 proved that the western portions of the nave were not completed in the XII Century, but it was only this last summer that additional evidence was found proving that the nave as a whole as well as the transept of Suger's church were started but never finished. In the western bays of the south side-aisle, a wall with projecting bases for engaged columns to support ribbed vaults was discovered in 1939 directly under the existing XIII Century exterior wall of the nave. The location of this wall and the bases establish their date before the XIII Century, and the masonry as well as the profiles of the bases place their construction in the XII Century. To the north, that is, toward the interior of the nave, there is another XII Century wall on an east-west axis parallel to the nave wall. This wall was built at the same time as, or immediately following, the narthex, which consists of the western façade and the two bays under the towers, and which was dedicated on June 9, 1140. The wall in question was erected to join the narthex with the then existing Carolingian, or VIII Century, nave. The interesting fact for the present discussion is that the wall rises to a height immediately under the existing pavement, whereas the pavement level intended for the construction of the exterior XII Century wall with the bases is over three feet below the present pavement level. The wall joining the narthex and Carolingian nave would have had to be completely destroyed, if the pavement of the outer XII Century building had ever been



FIG. 1. — XII Century foundations and plinth for bases of the north side of the nave of St. Denis Basilica. — Discovered under the paving of the north transept during the author's excavations at St. Denis in 1946. *Phot. Denise Fossard.*



executed. In other words the wall with its bases under the XIII Century masonry was part of a projected construction that was begun as an envelope outside an earlier building, which was preserved intact as long as possible in order that the services of the cult could be maintained. There is evidence that this occurred during the building of the Cathedral of Le Mans and in several other instances in the XII and XIII Centuries. The foundations of such an envelope and even the walls up to the springing of the vaults could be built before the earlier, smaller edifice needed to be destroyed.

In studying the first excavations with Focillon, we concluded that the western bays of the nave were certainly never finished, but that in accordance with Suger's writings it seemed likely that the transept and perhaps one or two of the eastern bays of the nave were completed before the death of Suger in 1151.<sup>2</sup> The new excavations have shown how difficult it is to interpret such medieval texts precisely, for positive evidence is now available to prove that the pre-XII Century constructions were never torn down to a level that would have permitted the completion of the XII Century pavement either in the transepts or in the nave. It is therefore possible to state conclusively that Suger's church was never actually completed, and at the same time it is finally possible to follow the progress of the different campaigns of construction in some detail.

In my opinion there were at least four, possibly five, different campaigns in the building of the church projected by Suger and his master masons. Two of these campaigns — the completion of the narthex and of the choir — have been recognized by all historians of St. Denis from the explicit statements in Suger's writings. The narthex we know was finished up to the level of the towers for the dedication on June 9, 1140.<sup>3</sup> The choir was begun the following month and completed in three years and three months, although the dedication did not take place until June 11, 1144.<sup>4</sup> Other campaigns are hinted at in the texts; but, until the recent excavations, all statements concerning them have been necessarily speculative, and there is still some choice in the matter.

It is difficult to know whether the joining of the narthex to the Carolingian nave should be regarded as a separate campaign. At present I am inclined to regard it as part of the narthex campaign. The masonry of the southern "joining" wall, which is the only one that has been completely excavated so far, forms an integral part of the masonry of the narthex. Suger also states that he destroyed the earlier entrance, including a porch with two towers built by Charlemagne over Pepin's tomb, when he began the construction of his new western entrance.<sup>5</sup> Although

2. SUGER, *De Administratione*, ch. XXVIII, edited and translated by E. PANOFKY, *Abbot Suger*, Princeton University Press, 1946, p. 51; hereafter referred to as ED. PANOFKY.

3. SUGER, *De Administratione*, ch. XXVII, *De Consecratione*, ch. IV, ED. PANOFKY, pp. 47, 99.

4. SUGER, *De Administratione*, ch. XXVIII, *De Consecratione*, ch. IV, ED. PANOFKY, pp. 49, 51, 105.

5. SUGER, *De Administratione*, ch. XXV, ED. PANOFKY, p. 45.

the evidence of the 1939 excavations may not be entirely conclusive, I believe that the entrance to the Carolingian nave was from the west and that when Suger mentioned the necessity of tearing down the earlier constructions, he referred not only to the narthex itself but to the construction that joined it to the Carolingian nave. In doing this he naturally desired to have a continuous vista from the new entrance along the whole length of the old nave to the new choir, which was already projected. The Carolingian façade would necessarily have had to be demolished if such a vista were to be achieved. It may be stated now that this "joining" construction was not intended to be vaulted since the walls are continuous and have no projecting bases for the supports of a ribbed vault. It is most likely that Suger's miraculous discovery of the beams in the forest of Rambouillet was occasioned by the need of securing beams long enough to cover this area.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore a wooden roof over this construction would have conformed more closely to the Carolingian nave of which it really formed a part. The evidence available at present therefore indicates that the juncture was built as part of the narthex and may be considered as part of the first campaign.

After finishing the chevet, or second campaign in 1144, Suger states that work was begun in the transept with the specific intention of connecting the new eastern and western portions and thus completing the entire church.<sup>7</sup> But he had premonitions that difficult times lay ahead. His fears were justified. The last years of his life were charged with grave responsibilities. Regent of France, while Louis VII embarked on his futile Crusade, he was likewise deeply preoccupied with the royal divorce that followed and which he knew would entail such grave consequences for the future of the kingdom. Chagrined at these failures and possibly repentant because he had not had a personal role in the Crusade itself, Suger's final efforts were spent in organizing another Crusade — efforts that were cut short by his final sickness and death. It is obvious that during the last six and a half years of his life, Suger could not have devoted himself completely to the constructions at St. Denis. But he did witness the laying of the foundations and the erection of the first courses of masonry of the walls along the entire north side of the nave and transept. This masonry was discovered in last summer's excavations.

Under the existing pavement of the north transept and the adjoining bays to the west, there is XII Century masonry that continues the alignment of the XIII Century nave wall. Further to the west, the same masonry exists under the XIII Century construction in the same manner as in the south side-aisle. It is interesting to note, however, that instead of being constructed with projecting bases rising directly from the pavement level, the system on the north side is similar to that in the Cathedral of Sens, where a large octagonal plinth exists under the bases of the piers.

6. SUGER, *De Consecratione*, ch. III, ED. PANOFKY, pp. 95-97.

7. SUGER, *De Administratione*, ch. XXIX, ED. PANOFKY, pp. 51-53.

At St. Denis only the triangular portions of the plinths for the engaged columns are present along the interior of the wall. Although these plinths are present in the eastern bays, there are none to the west. In the excavation of the north side-aisle only the first courses of the wall above the XII Century foundations were found — an indication that the construction progressed from east to west and that it diminished in height the further it progressed to the west.

The most recent discoveries in the south transept seem to prove that Suger did not live to see the last campaign of building in the XII Century. In the transept in alignment with the XIII Century nave wall and the XII Century masonry under it, walls were found with engaged bases identical with those discovered in 1939 in the western bays of the south side-aisle. There are no angular plinths and the profiles of the bases indicate a date nearer 1170 than 1150. We know that the years following Suger's death were difficult ones for the monks at St. Denis. Quarrels arose over the election of Suger's successor, and the treasury was depleted. Yet it is evident that after an interval of several years an attempt was made to continue the construction of the transept and nave. Apparently it was decided to build the foundations and the walls of the south side, and possibly to carry forward the work on the western towers, before finishing the walls of the north side. In this way the envelope was to be completed before demolishing the Carolingian nave. The meager funds and above all the absence of an energetic, guiding spirit retarded the work. Even the inconveniences of a building under construction for perhaps eighty years never forced Suger's successors to complete the project of which he was so proud. It is nevertheless evident that the so-called rebuilding of the nave and transept under Louis IX in the XIII Century was nothing more than the achievement of this project with alterations to make room for the royal tombs in the transept and in a style that was then very "modern" — the rayonnant style of Pierre de Montreuil.

If it is now certain that only those portions of Suger's church that exist today, with the exception of the upper portions of the choir, were actually built in the XII Century, it is also clear that Suger's architect conceived the plan for the transept and nave. This plan is of profound significance for the beginnings of Gothic architecture. The excavations of 1946 have brought to light a number of startling new details and make it possible to reconstruct the plan almost in its entirety.

The masonry of a large double doorway opening very probably from the church into the cloisters, was found under the existing pavement of the south transept. The presence of such a portal is not surprising. The unexpected factor is its location well inside the present transept and in direct alignment with the exterior walls of the projected XII Century nave. Unfortunately the XII Century masonry at a similar point in the north transept was removed at an indeterminate date when





FIG. 2. — Bases of the south side of the XII Century nave of the St. Denis Basilica. — Discovered during the author's excavations at St. Denis in 1946. *Phot. Denise Fossard.*

a series of burials took place, and there is consequently no information regarding the complete plan of the north transept. There can be no question, however, but that the XII Century plan of St. Denis lacked the familiar, large projecting transept of so many of the early Gothic churches of the second half of the XII Century. The plan was very similar to that of Notre Dame in Paris, with the transept in almost direct alignment with the walls of the nave and of the choir. The important dimensions of this south portal at St. Denis leads to the conclusion that a transept was planned in elevation, as at Notre Dame. There is even one additional similarity to be noted between the plans of these two churches. It is apparent that St. Denis was also to have had double side-aisles in the nave.

Unfortunately the archeological evidence for these double side-aisles is not as positive as it is for the exterior dimensions and form of the nave and transept. The only XII Century bases in the interior of the church that have as yet been discovered are those of the construction joining the narthex to the Carolingian nave. Interior supports were necessarily included in this portion which is over forty feet long, and it is plausible to presuppose that they were placed as a continuation of the Carolingian nave colonnade. The absence of bases for the other portions of the XII Century nave and transept is not difficult to explain in the light of the evidence already discussed. These interior supports were never built. Only the exterior walls were begun as an envelope, which was never sufficiently advanced to necessitate the demolition of the Carolingian nave and transept. Only the most foolhardy architect would have inconvenienced the celebration of the cult by destroying the existing nave and transept before he was definitely assured of the funds and materials to complete the new construction in a reasonably short period of time.

The evidence in support of a reconstruction of the XII Century nave with double side-aisles, is to be found in the dimensions of this nave and in the forms adopted by the architect in the choir. Suger has recorded that the dimensions of the choir and its ambulatories were carefully computed to conform with the dimensions of the old, or Carolingian, nave.<sup>8</sup> It is reasonable to suppose that once these dimensions were established in the chevet they would also have been respected in the new nave, if any uniformity was to be achieved. Yet we know that the overall dimensions of the new nave plus the side-aisles were wider than those of the earlier one. We also know from the bases of the attached columns on both the north and the south sides of the XII Century nave that the bays were to be only 12 feet wide. If the XII Century nave is reconstructed with the same width as the choir and only a single side-aisle is proposed to the north and south of the nave, the resulting bays would have to be approximately 27 by 12 feet — dimensions that are hardly admissible. On the other hand, if these side-aisle bays are divided exactly in half and a colonnade is placed to create double side-aisles, the bays become square,

8. SUGER, *De Consecratione*, ch. IV, ED. PANOFKY, p. 101.



FIG. 3. — XII Century portal of the south transept of the St. Denis Basilica. — Discovered during the author's excavations at St. Denis in 1946. *Phot. Denise Fossard.*



which is entirely plausible. In addition this middle colonnade falls into direct alignment with the columns separating the two ambulatories of the chevet. Uniformity and a logical construction are thus achieved, and as a consequence it may be assumed with confidence that Suger's architect envisaged a nave with double side-aisles.

These are the most important conclusions relating to the XII Century church at St. Denis that may be drawn from the recent excavations. A number of other interesting details remain to be analyzed and there is still much to be gained from a close study of the narthex and chevet. There are likewise several possible hypotheses to be advanced for the elevation of the choir. Were there tribunes at St. Denis? Was the elevation three or four stories? The excavations have thrown very little additional light on these problems, aside from fragments of the XII Century masonry found in the fill in different locations or often reemployed as part of the XIII Century foundations. A detailed discussion of these problems is beyond the scope of this brief resumé of new discoveries and belongs rightfully in the second volume now in preparation.

Brief mention should be made, nevertheless, of the pre-XII Century masonry that was discovered this last summer. Final judgment of these early foundations and walls cannot be made until the detailed drawings of the excavations have been completed. In spite of the difficulty of dating such masonry, I believe that remnants of the tower built in the XI Century with funds provided by William the Conqueror were found in the north transept. The tower was apparently an ambitious construction which, according to the texts, collapsed before it had been completed. If the existing masonry can be identified with this project, the tower was located in the northwest angle between the Carolingian transept and nave.

Important vestiges of an even earlier construction were also found in the excavations of both the north and south transept arms. In the western bays of the north transept a wall with truly massive substructions was uncovered. The regular masonry of the wall, built with mortar mixed with crushed bricks of reddish hue, can very probably be identified with the church built by Fulrad on this site in the VIII Century. If this can be proved, it may be stated that the excavations of 1946 have uncovered one of the best preserved remnants of Carolingian masonry as yet known in France. Other foundations evidently belonging to this early Carolingian church, corroborate the general outlines of the reconstruction proposed in my first volume, except perhaps for the dimensions of the transept and more exact indications for the width of the nave. Additional excavations of relatively small dimensions should complete the evidence for a definitive reconstruction of the Carolingian church, and it is hoped that these excavations may be completed this spring.

One of the more interesting conclusions that must be accepted as a result of these new discoveries is in relation to the well-known plan of the early buildings

at St. Denis published by Viollet-le-Duc in his *Dictionnaire*.<sup>9</sup> He states that this plan was the result of his work during the period of his restorations at St. Denis and particularly of the excavations made when he restored the pavement of the nave and transept to its original level after the misguided alterations completed by the architect Fontaine between 1811 and 1813. The precision of Viollet-le-Duc's plan, with the indication of the different types of masonry observed, have led scholars to accept it as trustworthy. As the excavations progressed this last summer, much of the same ground was covered. A careful reading of Viollet-le-Duc's text discloses that he claims to have excavated at the points marked "L" on the plan.<sup>10</sup> Of the six points "L" indicated, my excavations coincided with four. In none of the locations was masonry discovered that could be more than very remotely related to the plan published in the *Dictionnaire*. Furthermore, in the south transept at the precise spot of one of the "L" 's, a skeleton was found undisturbed with funerary vases at its head and feet. Three of the vases, still filled with charcoal, were unbroken. Yet the skeleton was only three and a half feet below the existing pavement, which is the work of Viollet-le-Duc. It is obvious that no one had excavated to any depth in this spot since the XIV or XV Century—the date assigned to the vases. It is also obvious that Viollet-le-Duc did not excavate in what might be termed a "scientific" manner. It is more likely that his so-called excavations were done in order to find adequate footing for the pavement he was putting in place and that, once such masonry was discovered, no attempt was made to discover what existed at a lower level. The result is a hodge-podge of inaccurate observations completed by schematic designs that followed preconceived hypotheses. In any case Viollet-le-Duc's plan must be discarded as a possible indication of the early buildings at St. Denis.

In conclusion, mention should also be made of what might be called tangential discoveries. In the XIII Century foundations under the north transept, a fine capital of the XII Century was found. The design, with griffons erect in a vigorous interlace, is typical of XII Century sculpture and may be compared with the engaged capitals to be found in some of the radiating chapels of the chevet. A fragment of sculpture was also found in the fill of another excavation in the same transept. It is a small head, unfortunately broken across the middle of the face, but with strong indications of the original modeling. A number of sarcophagi were also discovered in unexpected locations and at totally different levels. Only one of them was unquestionably intact, but it lacked any inscription or decoration. The contents included fragmentary remains of textiles embroidered with gold thread, which might indicate a person of some importance. Expert analysis of these fragments must be awaited before assigning a date to the tomb. Other sarcophagi were left unopened, because of a lack of time, but several skeletons were found intact that

9. VIOLLET-LE-DUC, *Dictionnaire Raisoné de l'Architecture Française*, 1868, vol. IX, p. 228.

10. VIOLLET-LE-DUC, *Op. cit.*, vol. IX, p. 227.

had originally been buried in wooden coffins, which had rotted completely. It was with these skeletons that funerary vases or pots were discovered. These ceramic pots, partially glazed, were filled with charcoal as a disinfectant at the time of burial.

It may be unfortunate that Viollet-le-Duc's opportunity of removing and replacing the entire pavement of the transept and nave is impractical today. In this way all the secrets of St. Denis might be disclosed. Yet it is equally fortunate that excavations have been permitted through the generous interest of the Director of the Monuments Historiques, the active support of Marcel Aubert, Senior Curator of the National Museums, the cooperation of M. Formigé, architect in charge of the Basilica of St. Denis, and the patient enthusiasm of M. le Curé. It is to be hoped that the few, small, necessary excavations that remain to be made may be accomplished in the immediate future and that the final solution of the problem of St. Denis may be achieved. In this small way Henri Focillon's inspiring guidance of his students may receive inadequate recognition.

January 1947.

SUMNER McKNIGHT CROSBY.







# OBSERVATIONS ON THE VAULTING PROBLEMS OF THE PERIOD 1088-1211

WHILE the development of Gothic vaulting is well understood in its general lines, certain recent work has contributed knowledge which makes the technical side of the development more understandable in several respects.

We know, of course, that the highly characterized Gothic vault is a thin sheet of small cut stones arranged in courses to form warped surfaces which are strong because of double curvature; a basket-work of slender arches, usually pointed, determines groin sections and carries the severies, especially during construction and before the mortar has gained full strength; thin trumpets of masonry, usually between large windows, are sufficient to carry the vault because of its lightness, and because flying or spur buttresses carry the thrusts to the lower and outer parts of the building.

Probably as a result of Eastern influence, pointed arches were used in Romanesque barrel vaulting before the end of the XI Century — for example at Cluny — permitting thinner masonry and therefore less weight in the vault. The experience of several millenia in the East had demonstrated the practicality of this. The pointed arch is an approximate catenary, and it is a fact that unless an arched structure has the catenary form, extra strength is needed in the arch to keep the arch itself intact, quite aside from the thrusting action generated in an arch of any kind. In the East such thrusts are traditionally controlled by loading the haunches of the vault; for vaults of ordinary size, this expedient is successful, though it increases the weight of the vault somewhat, and does not destroy the thrust, but merely directs it more favorably within the body of the

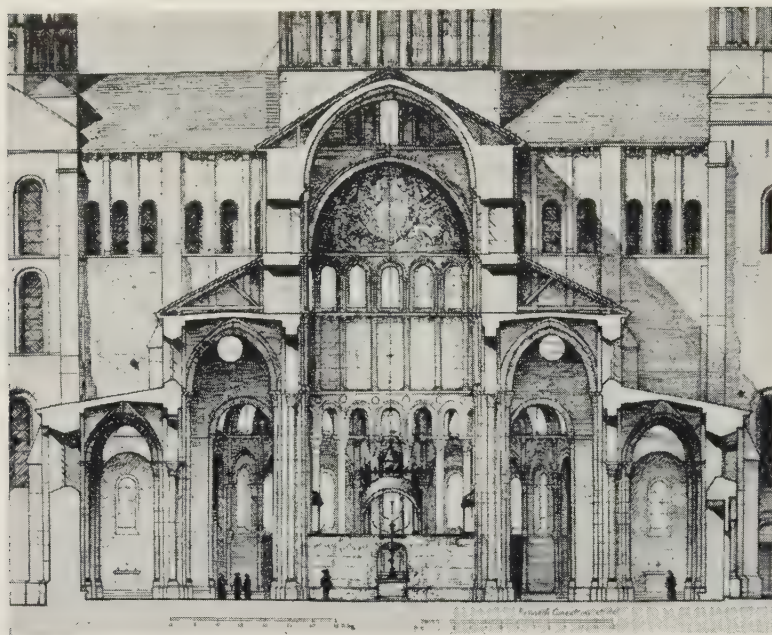


FIG. 1. — ABBEY CHURCH OF CLUNY. Section of the nave. (Built c. 1100-1120; destroyed 1798-1811). — *Courtesy of the Mediaeval Academy of America.*

supporting wall-work.

A notable step toward Gothic architecture was taken when the architects of the great church at Cluny (begun in 1088) erected a large vault of this kind. It was one of the boldest Romanesque vaults. The web was of rubble, with a minimum thickness of about 40 centimeters, and there was a haunch wall above a zone of clearstory windows. The impost was at 24.90 metres above the pavement, and the crown at 31 metres. In

the nave (Figs. 1 and 2) the vault spanned 10.45 metres in the clear over a length of about 75 metres, with sixty-six windows. The latter were arranged three on a side in the eleven bays, which were marked off by transverse arches 6.85 metres on centres under the vault. The clearstory and triforium walls were in cut stone, about 2.35 metres in thickness, and designed, by ingenious corbeling, to receive the vaulting thrust. Nevertheless the vault collapsed in 1125. Rebuilt with archaic flying buttresses soon after, it remained secure until the demolition (1798-1811). Thus the reason for the failure appears to have been outward bending in the long clearstory walls, which were somewhat overweighted on the outside. The barrel vault, being a surface of single curvature (like a cylinder), could not maintain its strength above spreading supports. The transverse ribs had about 100 square metres of vaulting web between them—far too great an area to be effectually stayed by such ribs without the advantage of double curvature in the vaulting web. The Cluny nave had proportions which were very close to the ideal Gothic relationships at Reims and Amiens. But the vault failed, and the church was criticized as being “rather dark.” Though the windows were numerous, deep reveals caused by the thickness of the clearstory walls prevented direct sunlight from passing through the windows during a great part of the day. Thus the church both suggested the Gothic ideal and demonstrated that Romanesque structure could not achieve it.

The interest in the two bays of vaulting at the east end of the Cluny narthex



(Figs. 2 and 3) resides in the fact that the architect planned to receive the vaulting thrust into the wall, as in the great nave, but adopted groin vaulting as a means of obtaining a generous clearstory without excessive height in the vault, employed ribs under the groins to diminish the unsupported area, and used vault-surfaces of double curvature in the scoop-shaped lateral penetrations above the windows. The web of the vault was probably of rubble. Lateral severies like those in the vault of the Cluny narthex are technically called ramping penetrations because the surface climbs, so to speak, toward the keystone; but from the point of view of statics, the vault is rather to be considered as warping down to and into the wall. For strength of wall, the upper register of the clearstory was limited to a single window at each side. A strip buttress on the exterior apparently took care of the weight and thrust brought down by the ribs. Thus having disposed of his weight and thrusts, the designer opened two or three windows on each side of the bays, at the lower register of the clearstory.

Looking at the matter from another point of view, we may say that the architect of the nave considered the haunch wall of the barrel vault as controlling the thrusts almost completely, and he therefore ventured to place the vault above a many-windowed clearstory. He overestimated the resistance of a long pierced wall. The architect of the narthex considered that the thrusts of the lateral severies were cared for by the wall at the upper register of the clearstory. By using groin ribs under the vault, he made very much more effective use of the masonry

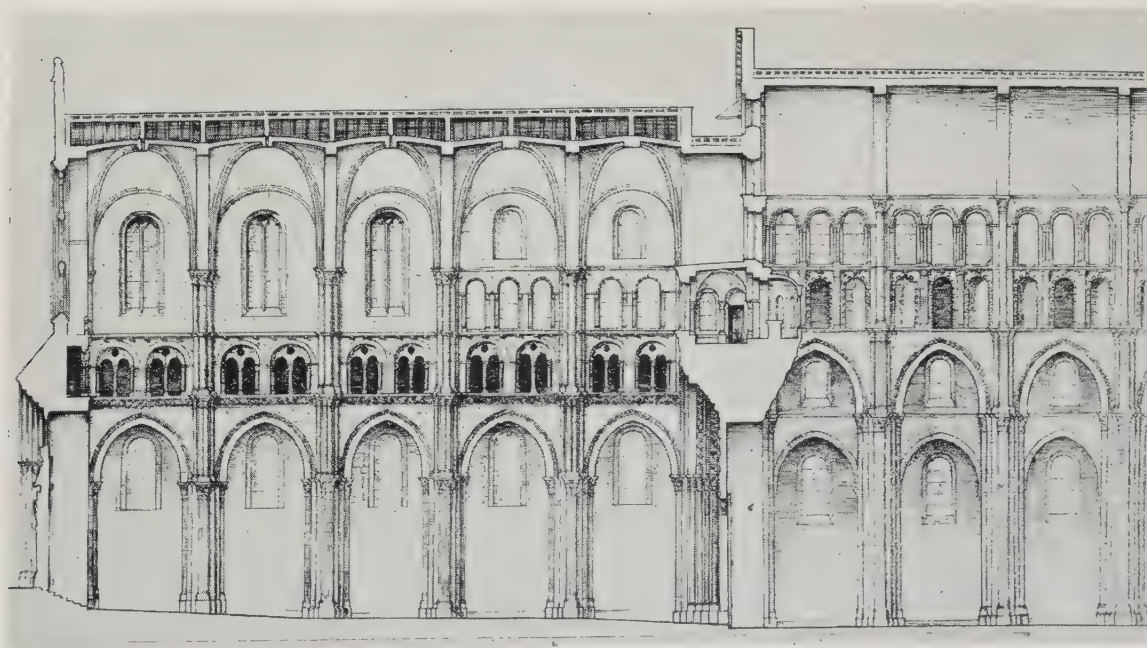


FIG. 2. — ABBEY CHURCH OF CLUNY. — Longitudinal Section of Narthex and West End of the Nave. *Courtesy of the Medieval Academy of America.*



between the window-groups than before. The warped web of his vault was structurally superior to the older form. But it seems likely that he overestimated the strength of the wall and the strip buttresses. The narthex was completed in the Burgundian half-Gothic style of the late XII or early XIII Century, and the original bays were strengthened by flying buttresses at that time if not before.

The date of the original bays is unfortunately difficult to determine. After long consideration of slight available evidence, I have concluded that "rat-tail" was left on the façade of the nave so that the narthex, supposedly contemplated in 1107-15 when the façade was built, might be added when the nave itself had been completed (as it was, shortly before 1125). The beauty of the nave façade of Cluny, with its notable group of sculptured portals, was such that I long hesitated to believe it could have been temporary—intended from the first to be masked by a narthex. Yet the Great Portal with its sculpture had a definite function in the Cluniac processional liturgy, and was properly an interior feature.

The temporary arrangement at Cluny lives on in the imposing portal fronts planned soon after 1120 but never completed, at the Cluniac priories of Vézelay and La Charité-sur-Loire.

The Cluny narthex might logically have been begun in the 1120's, and the older parts of it finished in the 1130's, by which time the Cluniac priories in Paris (St. Martin des Champs), Moissac (St. Pierre), Vézelay, Airaines, and Marolles-en-Brie could show interesting rib vaults. Since we find such ribbed construction within the Cluniac order, the narthex bays at Cluny seem appropriately dated not far from 1130. The eastern key-stone has survived, and shows a very archaic rib profile (a semi-circle tangent to each vertical side of the rib, with a larger semicircle between, tangent to the others). Early keystones are rare, but they do occur at nearby Vézelay, in the

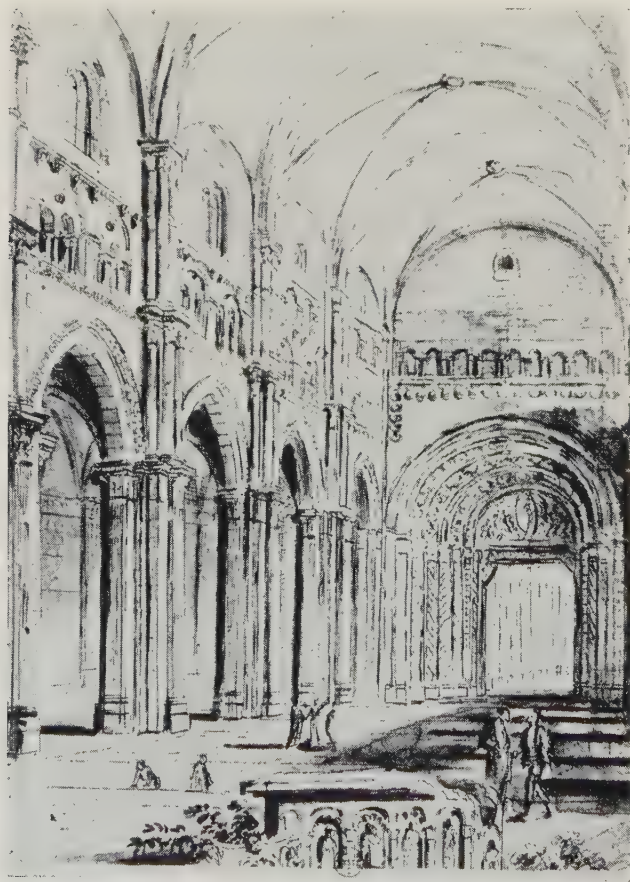


FIG. 3. — LALLEMAND. — Narthex of the Abbey Church of Cluny, drawing, 1787. — (The longitudinal section of the narthex reproduced as Figure 2 is based on this drawing and careful measurements taken in the excavations).

narthex (1132 or later). The key-stone at Cluny was presented as a medallion of the Paschal Lamb, continuing the Resurrection and Ascension iconography of the Great Portal just below.

Abbot Suger was at Cluny in 1130, when Pope Innocent II gained the obedience of France, disputed of course by the Antipope Anacletus II. It would be interesting to know whether the design of the Abbey Church of St. Denis (begun about 1134) affected, or was affected by, the design of the Cluny narthex. It is impossible to say, yet the forthcoming study by Professor Crosby on that first of all Gothic churches will show interesting relationships. The St. Denis vaults employed ramping penetrations on ribbed structure, and (as obviously as in the Cluny narthex) the thrusts were received into the

walls without flying buttresses. The vaulting had thin webs of small cut stones carefully fitted together, as became usual thenceforth in Gothic vaulting.

It was apparently necessary to replace the high vault at St. Denis, to the extent it had been built; and this would tend to show that the architect overestimated the resistance of the wall, just as the architects at Cluny had done.

The original design for Notre Dame in Paris, begun in 1163, has definite relationships with Saint Denis. These have been less obvious since XIII Century rebuilding in both places. The high vault of Notre Dame, reaching 32.60 metres above the pavement, was the first to exceed Cluny in height, and the nave marked an advance beyond St. Denis, in that flying buttresses were planned from the first as an integral part of the design (Figs. 4 and 5). M. Marcel Aubert, who studied the matter very carefully, was convinced that all flying buttresses before Notre Dame were added, like those of Cluny, as casual expedients. At Notre Dame itself the original buttresses have been modified. M. Aubert points out that the aisle piers which are in line with the major transverse arches of the nave are stiffened by shafting — as they should be in order to carry flying buttresses.



FIG. 4. NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL, PARIS. Nave with hypothetical buttress system (all the piers should perhaps be sustained by buttresses).



The alternating intermediate aisle piers do not have the columnar shafting which stiffens the others. If shafting is to be taken as *proof* of flying buttresses, then the intermediate piers would not carry them, and the exterior of the nave would appear as shown hypothetically in the reworked photograph. The thrust of the intermediate part of the vault would be taken up by the strip buttresses. But it must be remarked that Viollet-le-Duc,<sup>1</sup> who knew the building very well, believed that the buttresses were uniform, bay by bay, and merely rebuilt at the top in the XIII Century. If there were any signs of a primitive alternate buttress system, Viollet-le-Duc did not note them.

It will be observed that the existing vault of Notre Dame, shown unchanged in the reworked photograph of the interior, has the typical Gothic vaulting trumpet or *tas de charge* where the major transverse ribs occur. From these trumpets the vaulting thrusts were certainly picked up by flying buttresses. Beside the intermediate ribs of the sexpartite bays, the webs of the vault are obviously warped down to and into the wall, as in the narthex of Cluny. A glance at the pictures makes it clear that even if there were intermediate buttresses, the architect depended somewhat on the strength of the clearstory wall-work. The thrusts of all of the vaulting were transmitted to the buttresses through the wall, not (as in perfected Gothic) by vertical ribbons of masonry, hardly wider than a buttress, between great windows. (Fig. 6.)

This further step was achieved in the design of the Cathedral at Chartres (1194) where the typical Gothic scheme of uniform bays and buttressing was first used (and with what dignity and grace!) in a highly evolved design. At Chartres the solution of vaulting prob-

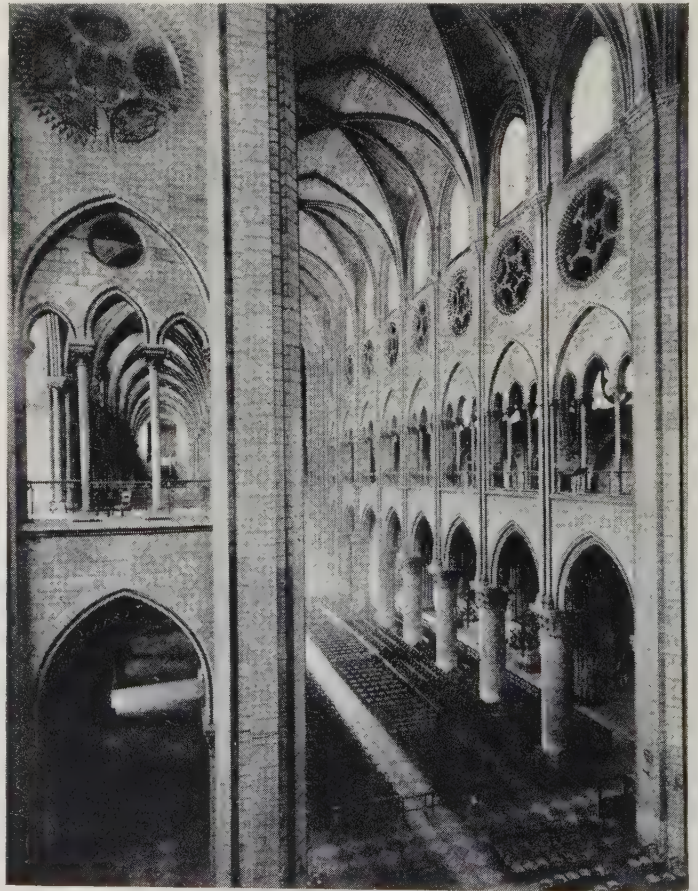


FIG. 5. — NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL, PARIS. — Nave, interior showing original clerestory and triforium design.

<sup>1</sup>. *Dictionnaire Raisonné*, Vol. II, p. 288; Vol. I, pp. 68, 192.



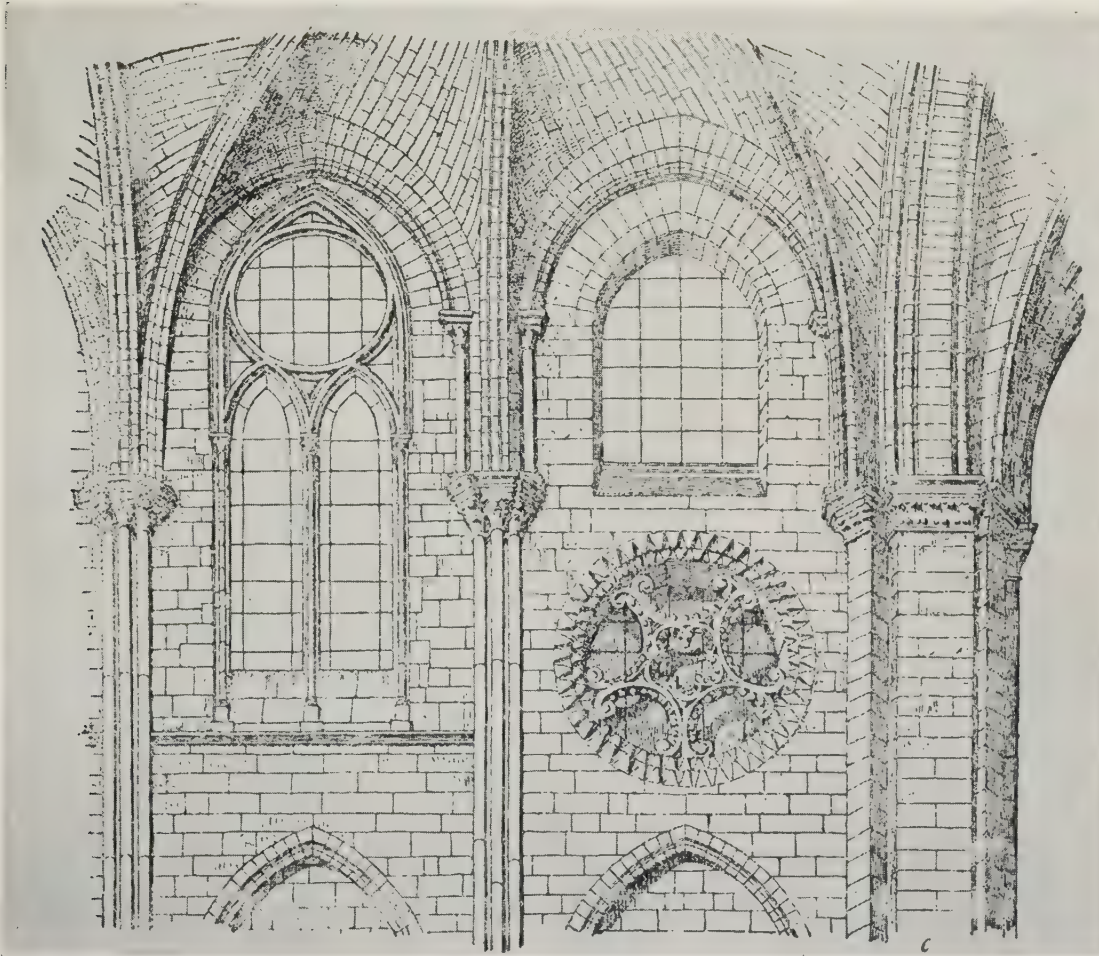


FIG. 6. — NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL, PARIS. — Drawing, by Moore, from MOORE, *Gothic Architecture* (Fig. 78), showing the intermediate vaulting warped down to and into the wall. The large window was introduced about 1230. To the left is a vaulting trumpet which transmitted its thrust through the wall to one of the original flying buttresses.

lems was completed, but problems connected with the windows and roofing still remained. It is entertaining to remember that whereas Gothic structure, achieved in large measure at St. Denis, for the first time allowed vast windows in a fireproof medieval church, the stained glass windows in that very building started a vogue which nullified the advantage as far as illumination of Early Gothic churches was concerned; successful illumination required several times the window-area available at St. Denis. From this circumstance arises the need of stone tracery (archaic still at Chartres). Made practicable by tracery, the enlarged windows quite naturally bring about slender piers, and quite as naturally produce a pier shape which is functionally perfect in relation to the buttressing system.

After the first construction at Chartres it must have been felt, and rightly, that the slenderness of the piers between the windows compromised the stability of the

wall above the windows, particularly since so huge and steep a roof is subject to enormous pressures from the wind. Consequently an upper range of flying buttress arches was added to the building. Perhaps the architect of Notre Dame in Paris had the roof in mind when he designed his clearstory wall. At any rate, buttresses now took the place of wall construction in resisting extra stress from wind pressure on the vast cathedral roofs.

It was Jean d'Orbais who in his magnificent design for the Cathedral Coronation Church of France at Reims (1211) brought the development of vault, window, and flying buttress together in perfection (Fig. 7). That needs no comment here. An important index to the relationship of Romanesque to Gothic is the fact that the proportions

of the nave section at Reims are almost exactly the same as those at Cluny, but with dimensions more than one-quarter again as large. The Romanesque scheme of Cluny proved unstable; Reims, more fragile in appearance, has survived two fires, and even bombardment during the war of 1914-18.

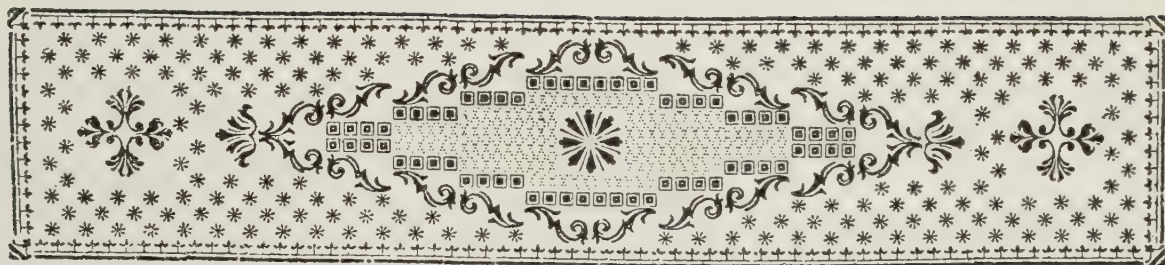


FIG. 7. — REIMS CATHEDRAL. — A photograph taken before the glass was replaced, which shows with uncommon clarity the vertical ribbons of masonry from which the lower flying buttresses pick up their thrusts. It is believed that the typical Gothic bar tracery was invented for this building.

January 30, 1945.

KENNETH JOHN CONANT.





# A LATE GOTHIC COMPUTATION OF RIB VAULT THRUSTS

*"... si nous voulons bien saisir le sens et la portée de ce qui nous occupe, notre problème est, dans une large mesure, un problème de restitution intellectuelle. Penser comme l'artiste, voilà la règle de notre recherche."* HENRI FOCILLON, *Le Problème de l'Ogive*, in: "Bulletin de l'Office des Instituts d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art," No. 3, 1935.

— I —

ONE OF THE most absorbing issues in medieval archeology arose during the 1930's over Viollet-le-Duc's "rational" interpretation of the structure of the rib vault. Students of Gothic architecture, however, are even today far



from agreement upon an interpretation of the play of forces in the vault,<sup>1</sup> and so the issue can hardly be said to have been resolved by recent publications. This article will attempt an approach hitherto unused by the parties to the debate.

We may begin with a brief review of Viollet-le-Duc's theory of vault construction. In general, he insisted that all parts of the Gothic fabric may be deduced from the premise of the rib vault. In the rib vault he identified the pointed arch as a new principle of construction permitting an unprecedented combination and concentration of vault thrusts. Therefore he proposed that Gothic structure is the antithesis of the "passive" and "inert" structure of the ancient world. Viollet-le-Duc's theory of Gothic structure is that of an assembly of moving, shifting solids destined for an intended and calculated equilibrium. In this theory he found it necessary to interpret the transverse ribs as permanent and elastic centrings "carrying" or "relieving" the web of the vault. Hence he postulated the independent relation of the ribs to the webs. In the rib vault, furthermore, he interpreted the work of the longitudinal web compartments as being done TOWARD the ribs, i.e., in an anti-gravitational direction. Finally, he interpreted the thrusts of all parts, as varying according to the nature of materials and their specific strengths and weights.<sup>2</sup> To such a "rational" declaration that form follows function, many of the programs and manifestoes of the new architecture of the XX Century owe their intellectual origin. As Pol Abraham has pointed out, Viollet-le-Duc sought to bridge the XIX Century chasm between art and industry, by emphasizing the rational components of medieval art, but to achieve the end, he had to invent a "romantic" and "subjective" system of "anthropomorphic" mechanics.<sup>3</sup>

In 1934 Marcel Aubert published a paper bearing upon a part of the thought of Viollet-le-Duc.<sup>4</sup> By patient accumulation and analysis of early examples, Aubert decided that the crossrib system in the Ile de France facilitated the building of the vault, and reinforced the web at its weak points along the groins and summit lines. Aubert also arrived at the conclusion that vaults of domical form require heavy transverse arches, especially in the monuments of the second half of the XII Century. With the XIII Century effort to level the summit lines of

1. In this country, POL ABRAHAM's essays are well-known, although MASSON's important work has not been read so widely. No American scholars have joined the debate in print. In conversation with colleagues one gathers, however, that ABRAHAM's work is regarded as definite. See: POL ABRAHAM, *Viollet-le-Duc et le Rationalisme Médiéval*, Paris, 1934, and H. MASSON, *Le Rationalisme dans l'Architecture du Moyen Age*, in: "Bulletin Monumental," XCIV, 1935, pp. 29-50. Two interesting essays seek to resolve the issue: ROBERT DORÉ, *Que Reste-t-il des Théories de Viollet-le-Duc sur le Rationalisme Médiéval*, in: "Gazette des Beaux Arts," ser. 6, vol. XIV, 1935, pp. 120-125; and HENRI FOCILLON, *Le Problème de l'Ogive*, in: "Bulletin de l'Office des Instituts," No. 3, 1935.

2. EUGÈNE VIOLETT-LE-DUC, *Dictionnaire Raisoné de l'Architecture Française du XIe au XVIe Siècle*, Paris, 1854-1868, I, pp. 45-46, 73-74, 194; IV, pp. 14, 85, 126; IX, p. 501.

3. ABRAHAM, *Op. cit.*, p. 102.

4. *Les Plus Anciennes Croisées d'Ogives*, in: "Bulletin Monumental," XCIII, 1934, pp. 6-67 and 137-237.

the vault, Aubert pointed out that the role of the transverse arch was diminished in favor of the crossrib system. It will be recalled that Aubert's entire demonstration was confined to discovering historical (i.e. archeological) proofs of a utilitarian function for the crossrib.

On the other hand, Pol Abraham, Marcel Aubert's pupil,<sup>5</sup> was not concerned to retrace the history of the experimental stages of the crossrib system. His controversial thesis was directed chiefly against the "anthropomorphic" interpretation of Gothic structure by Viollet-le-Duc. The attack was based upon a fresh rationalization of the play of forces in the vault. Throughout the work he was especially eager to discredit the theory of the "carrying" or "relieving" role of the transverse arch, whether in the barrel vault or the crossrib vault. In the rib vault, he interpreted the crossribs as elements unfavorable to stability, because of the additive nature of their own arch thrusts. He also made a great point of the fact that rib section does not increase proportionally with the span and weight of the web as it should, he argued, if the rib were functioning in the way proposed by Viollet-le-Duc. Although Abraham's engineering knowledge has been shown occasionally inadequate to the task he set himself, all students are agreed that the morphological, sociological, and philosophical implications of his argument remain valuable. In striking contrast to Aubert's method, Abraham confined himself mainly to theoretical proofs of the non-function of the rib, providing mathematical and intuitive arguments for his new interpretation.

A defender of Viollet-le-Duc, the French engineer H. Masson, soon brought out a searching criticism of Abraham's theory.<sup>6</sup> According to Masson, Abraham made fundamental errors of calculation through his use of obsolete empirical formulas. The chief error consisted in overlooking the fact that the deformative force of a vaulted span is inversely proportional to the square of its thickness, and proportional to the square of the square of the span. From these propositions in the modern theory of elasticity, Masson passed to a demonstration that a thin-plate groin vault will not stand without ribs. In two vaults doing the same work — one with transverse ribs, and one without — Masson demonstrated that the rib vault exercised less thrust, thus disposing of Abraham's contention that the rib thrusts were merely additive threats to stability. On the whole, Masson rejected Abraham's thesis as scientifically unacceptable, and returned to a functional interpretation of the rib, much as in Viollet-le-Duc's terms.

Both parties to the debate were unable, for lack of documents, to reconstruct the intention of the Gothic builder. The problem of intention is always latent, however, for Aubert demonstrates the provisional utility of the crossrib system,

5. *Op. cit.* An excellent bibliography of the earlier departures from VIOULET-LE-DUC's theory is given by AUBERT, *Op. cit.*, pp. 205-206.

6. MASSON, *Op. cit.*

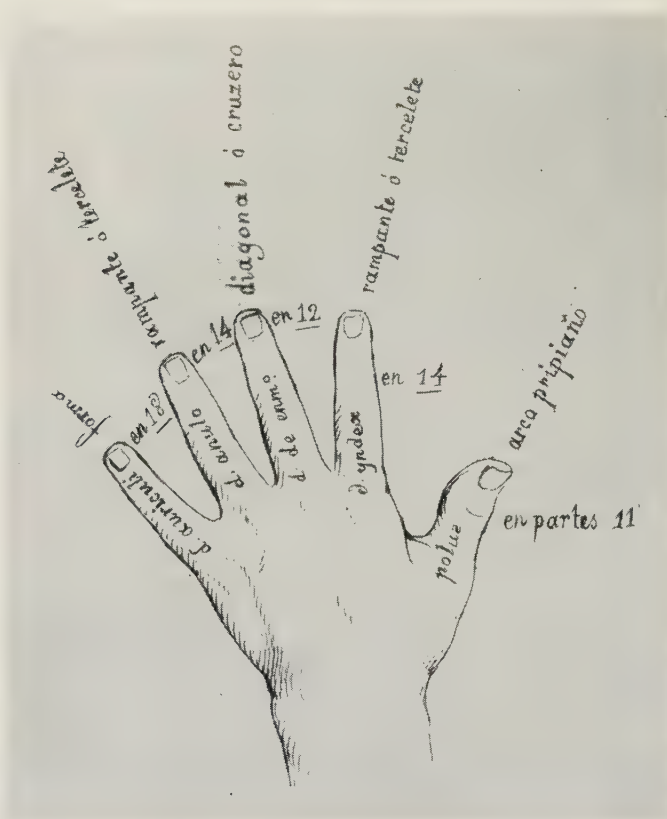


FIG. 1. — Proportional scheme: the hand (after RODRIGO GIL).

and Abraham proposed a kind of morphological purpose related to esthetic intention.<sup>7</sup> It is our proposal that overt intention is the central problem, if, indeed, it can be reconstructed.

## — II —

In this connection, a remarkable Spanish text of the XVI Century is available. Its date and authorship were long obscured by the fact that it was embedded in a XVII Century treatise that remained unpublished until 1868.<sup>8</sup> Through internal evidence and the work of J. Camón,<sup>9</sup> we now know that the first six chapters of the *Compendio de Arquitectura*, by Simón García, compiled 1681-1685, were written by a XVI Century architect, Rodrigo Gil

de Hontañón (about 1500-1577). These six chapters deal with proportions, structural computations, and methods of construction. Many pages deal with the rib vault.

For us, the importance of Rodrigo Gil's career is his lifelong identification with the powerful current of Gothicizing style in Spain. During adult life, from 1525 on, he was associated with the building of Segovia Cathedral.<sup>10</sup> After his appointment as *maestro mayor* in 1560, he completed the choir upon his father's

7. Developed briefly in an essay entitled *Nouvelle Explication de l'Architecture Religieuse Gothique*, in: "Gazette des Beaux Arts," ser. 6, vol. XI, 1934, pp. 257-271.

8. Under the name of a XVII Century compiler, SIMÓN GARCÍA, as the *Compendio de Arquitectura*, edited by RICARDO DE MARIÁTEGUI, *Arte en España*, VII, 1868.

9. J. CAMÓN, *La Intervención de Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón en el Manuscrito de Simón García*, in: "Archivo Español de Arte," No. 45, 1941, pp. 300-305. CAMÓN reported that a new edition of the manuscript is currently in preparation in Spain, from the manuscript in the Biblioteca Nacional at Madrid. The MARIÁTEGUI edition of 1868 is fragmentary, but the chapters by HONTAÑÓN appear to be printed intact, together with illustrations based upon those in the García manuscript, presumably after HONTAÑÓN.

10. THIEME-BECKER, *Künstlerlexikon*, XIV, 1921, pp. 19-20. JUAN AGAPITO Y REVILLA, *Un Laborioso Arquitecto Castellano del Siglo XVI*; RODRIGO GIL, in: "Arquitectura, Órgano Oficial de la Sociedad Central de Arquitectos," Madrid, V, 1923, No. 47, pp. 57-63.



plans in a campaign beginning about 1563. Likewise at Salamanca Cathedral, the other great Gothicizing project of the century, Rodrigo Gil became *maestro mayor* in 1538, succeeding Juan de Alava. He also built many rib-vaulted parish churches, in addition to continuous activity upon projects in Renaissance style, such as the facade of the University at Alcalá after 1543. Rodrigo Gil was, furthermore, the son of another Gothicizing master, Juan Gil de Hontañón.<sup>11</sup> The family came from Rasines in Santander province, and there is good reason to believe that its members had been active builders for many generations. In Rodrigo Gil, therefore, we have the heir to a long tradition with its roots in Gothic building. This tradition he recorded in the manuscript utilized by Simón García. The date of writing may tentatively be assigned to Rodrigo Gil's mature years, about 1538, or the time of his first major appointment as *maestro mayor* at Salamanca Cathedral.

In his remarkable chapters, which are unique in the class of medieval and Renaissance treatises on construction, Rodrigo Gil gives an exact terminology for the parts of the rib vault.<sup>12</sup> The fundamental members of the rib vault are, of course, the ogives (or cross ribs), intersecting diagonally across the bay; the wall ribs adjoining the bearing walls, and the transverse ribs, spanning the bay.

Hontañón analyzes the behavior of these various ribs, designating the transverse ribs as *arcos pricipiaños*. These, he says, exercise the greatest thrust. The ogives (*arcos cruceros*) thrust "obliquely"<sup>13</sup> and therefore, according to Hontañón, may be of thin and light construction. His implication is that they are doing less work than the transverse ribs. The intermediate or *tierceron* ribs from impost to keystone (*terceletes*) exercise the same order of thrust

11. E. ORTIZ TORRE, *Sobre los Arquitectos Juan y Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón y Juan de Rasines*, in: "Archivo Español de Arte y Arqueología," No. 45, 1941, pp. 315-317. See also: FERMÍN DE SOJO Y LOMBA, *Los Maestros Canteros de Trasmiera*, Madrid, 1935, p. 84.

12. *Arte en España*, VII, 1868, p. 178.

13. On "oblique" thrusts see: ABRAHAM, *Le Rationalisme*, 1934, p. 10. He condemns the archeologists' reference to oblique thrusts when all thrusts are horizontal. Only the resultant of forces can be oblique.

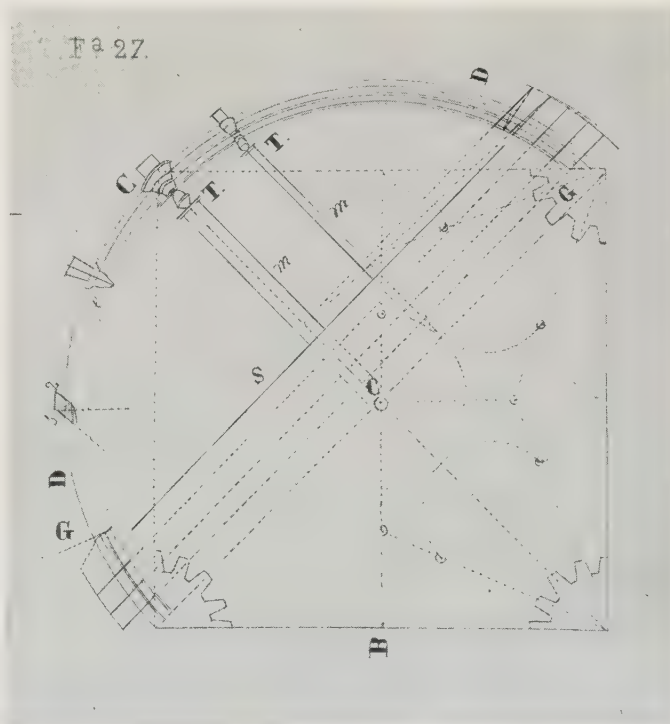


FIG. 2. — Method of building a rib vault (after RODRIGO GIL).

as the ogives. The wall ribs, finally, called *arcos de forma*, he later fails altogether to mention in his computation of thrusts. The implication is clear that he considers the wall ribs as exercising no outward thrust worth computing. Therefore he compares the bundle of ribs to the human hand;<sup>14</sup> the various ribs must be scaled proportionally to the thrust they exercise. The ratio of the tranverse ribs is to the ogives and tiercerons as the thumb is to the middle finger and index or ring finger; the wall rib, finally, is scaled as the little finger (Fig. 1).

In arithmetical measures, the relative sectional dimensions of the various ribs are determined from the over-all width or side of the bay as a whole. For example, the sectional height of the transverse rib is one-twentieth the width of the bay, where the width is equal to the height of the bearing walls. The cross ribs or ogives are one twenty-fourth the width; the tiercerons are one twenty-eighth; and the wall ribs one-thirtieth. In the case of rectangular or barlong bays, the designer must take one-half the sum of the two dimensions as the base from which to compute the sectional heights of the various ribs.<sup>15</sup>

Rodrigo also provides a method for computing the weight of the keystones,<sup>16</sup> as well as a description of the method used to build the rib system. He states that the normal weight per foot of ogive or crossrib, is one quintal, or 100 pounds. To find the weight of the necessary keystone, he suggests taking the sum of the lengths of the two diagonal ribs from impost to impost, subtracting the length of one ogive from impost to key, and extracting the square root of the remainder. This root, expressed in quintales, equals the optimal weight of the keystone, at which the key will function properly in resisting the upward thrust of the stones in the arch of the rib.

To explain the building of the rib system, he shows (Fig. 2) a simultaneous plan and section, with one ogive, the impost, keystone, and pendant secondary keystone all in place.<sup>17</sup> In the haunches of the vault, a little above impost level, a platform scaffold was built. On it, the entire vault design of ribs and keystones was laid out in line drawing. Wooden centrings were then constructed to locate the various keystones and pendants in their designated places. The stones were supported in position by wooden columns of correct lengths. The ribs were then built and finally, the masonry web over the ribs was laid. Hontañón also indicates that the keystones and pendants were drilled longitudinally, and that the perforations were useful for cleaning the intrados of the vault; for hanging lamps; and for removing the scaffolds after completion.

14. *Arte en España*, p. 180.

15. *Id.*, p. 183.

16. *Id.*, p. 174.

17. *Id.*, p. 182.





tions or computations pertain to the thrusts of the entire vault, including both ribs and web. At no point is the web specifically mentioned; Rodrigo Gil probably assumes that the computation in terms of rib dimensions automatically accounts for the weights and thrusts of the web. Therefore, we may suppose, he interpreted the weight and thrust of the web as a variable quantity governed by the dimensions of the bay, and by the size of the ribs. In other words, large bays demand ribs of large sectional height; large ribs in turn call for thick expanses of web.<sup>19</sup> If the designer, therefore, computes thrust in terms of the aggregate linear lengths of the ribs, he will automatically account for attendant web thrusts. In mathematical terms, we may say that Rodrigo Gil interpreted aggregate thrusts in terms of the square root of the sum of the linear dimensions of the bay. These linear dimensions, however, are interpreted in terms of the rib lengths, so that his computations may be reworded as follows: thrust varies as the square root of the sum of the lengths of the ribs, diminished by empirical values. Hence we are given a tangible indication of Gothic intention: the play of forces in the rib vault was symbolized for the builder by the size, number, and arrangement of the ribs.

That this last interpretation of Rodrigo Gil's remarks is correct, can be demonstrated by reference to his methods of computing the thrusts of a barrel vault. He gives several rules. The most elaborate involves geometrical constructions for plotting the necessary thickness of the bearing wall or buttresses.<sup>20</sup> In this method (Fig. 3), the radius of an arch or barrel vault was taken as the side of a square at impost level. A line from the keystone through the diagonal of the square at its intersection with the semicircle of the arch profile was then constructed. A normal to the other diagonal, at the impost, was also constructed. The two lines then intersected. The distance from the impost to this intersection was used as a radius with the center on the impost, to strike off, on the impost line, the necessary thickness of bearing wall or buttress. Another rule, with an even higher safety factor, suggests taking the thickness of the bearing wall as one-fourth the diameter of the vault.<sup>21</sup> This appears to have been a rule of thumb for rapid mental calculation without great accuracy. Neither it nor the foregoing rule takes the height of the bearing wall into account, but Hontañón advances several others, of which the most interesting recommends the following procedure: The thickness of the buttress is computed by taking the square root of the sum of the height of the bearing wall (to impost level) and the radius of

19. This last clause is our interpolation. Nowhere does Rodrigo expressly mention the thickness, or any computation for the thickness of rib vault webs. He does, however, give an elaborate and confused rule for computing the thickness of a barrel vault when the span and height of the impost are known. In its present form (*Arte en España*, p. 177) this rule is unintelligible, having been compressed or otherwise mutilated, perhaps by Simón García.

20. *Id.*, pp. 175-179.

21. See note 25.

the vault. It is to be noted that these rules all pertain to the thickness of the buttress at impost level; at ground level, according to Hontañón, increments must be made to provide for the taluses and other ornamental forms.

All these rules derive the size of the buttressing from the span dimension. The last-mentioned rule is particularly interesting for our purposes. Height and radius of the span at impost level, are the linear dimensions of which the square root of the sum yields the thickness of the needed bearing wall or buttress element. The method of computation is categorically similar to the one used with rib vaults, although the magnitudes are widely different.

It is now necessary to compare the results of these two kinds of computation, to discover whether Rodrigo Gil thought that one form of vaulting needed more buttressing than the other. We shall assume a situation that Rodrigo implies: two equal bays, one to be rib vaulted, and the other to be barrel vaulted. Let us suppose the bays are square in identical dimensions, and with impost levels of a height equal to the span. Let us also assume, as suggested by XVI Century practice in Spain, that the various ribs all form nearly round-headed arches. Now in both rib- and barrel-vaulted bays, the spans and heights are given equal. In the rib vault then, we may reduce all pertinent rib lengths to terms of half the transverse span, here expressed by "R." In a sample computation, Rodrigo Gil provides a set of rib lengths. From impost to keystone, the transverse rib is given as 15 feet; the ogive as 34 feet; and each tierceron (bow-piece) as  $22\frac{1}{2}$  feet. By the formula for the circumference of the circle, we derive the following radii for each of these rib lengths:

$$R_t = 9.55$$

$$R_o = 21.52$$

$$R_w = 14.15$$

where  $R_t$  expresses the radius of the transverse rib;  $R_o$  of the ogive; and  $R_w$  of the tierceron (here equated with the wall rib and expressed as such). By a further

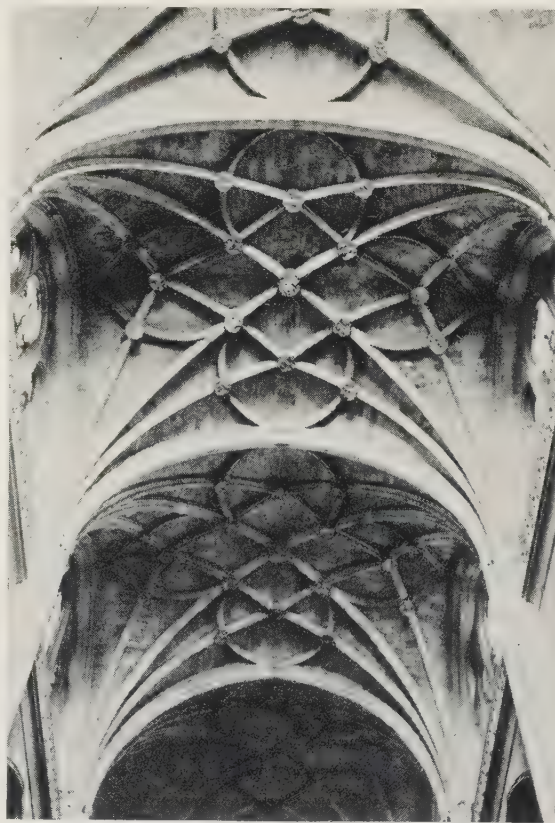


FIG. 4. — Cathedral, Segovia, Spain. — Nave vaults. — Courtesy of Arthur Byne.

approximation, it is seen that these linear dimensions are related roughly as multiples of five feet. It is therefore possible to express  $R_w$  and  $R_o$  in terms of  $R_t$  or  $R$ :

$$R_w = 3/2 R$$

$$R_o = 2R$$

We may now state Rodrigo Gil's formula of computation entirely in terms of  $R$ . In the first step, it will be recalled that his cluster of rib thrusts consists of the following: one transverse rib; two ogives; and four tiercerons, all taken from impost to keystone only. In terms of the circumferences of circles of different radii, or  $C_w$ ,  $C_o$ , and  $C_t$ , Rodrigo Gil's formula may be written

Thickness of buttress =  $2/3 \sqrt{2/3 (C_w + 1/2 C_o + 1/4 C_t) + H_b}$ , where  $H_b$  = height of buttress. Writing  $H_b$  as  $2R$ , and substituting values of  $R$  for  $C_w$ ,  $C_o$ , and  $C_t$ , we have  $2/3 \sqrt{2/3 (3\pi R + 2\pi R + 1/2\pi R) + 2R}$ , by the expression of the circumference in terms of radius. This reduces to  $2.9 \sqrt{R}$ .

If we now apply the same method to his computation for the buttress depth of a barrel vault over a similar bay, Hontañón's own formula may be written  $\sqrt{H + R}$ , where  $H$  is impost height; and  $R$  is half the span. Converting into terms of  $R$ , we have  $\sqrt{3R}$ , or  $1.73\sqrt{2}$ . Therefore we learn that Rodrigo Gil had in mind to buttress a rib vault far more heavily than a barrel vault over an identical bay, in a ratio roughly 5 to 3.<sup>22</sup>

We may now return to an earlier remark of Hontañón's. In his scaling or rating of the thrusts exercised by the various ribs, he singles out the transverse rib as the most critical, and urges that it be given the largest sectional dimensions.<sup>23</sup> Here it is necessary to distinguish the vaults built by Rodrigo Gil from those of his XIII and XIV Century Gothic predecessors. In Segovia (Fig. 4) or Salamanca Cathedrals (Fig. 5), for example, maximum and minimum vault elevations above the floor of the nave are different from those of the earlier French cathedrals. In our Spanish examples, the keystone at the crossing of the ogival ribs is always the highest; and the keystone of the transverse rib spanning the nave is always the lowest (Fig. 6). A transverse section through the nave at any transverse rib will reveal a mildly pointed arch solidly loaded with masonry above the haunches. A similar section through the nave at the keystone of any pair of cross-ribs will show a thin, curved span of masonry bridging the lateral walls. The roof therefore consists of a continuous "plate" of masonry, supported at intervals upon

22. Rodrigo addresses his remarks to the problem of computing the thrusts of a rib vault with tierceron ribs (bow pieces). Such a rule does not yield our value when the lengths of the tiercerons are omitted from the calculation, but a lower value of  $\sqrt{R}$ . We must suppose that the rule involved greater magnitudes for the rib lengths when their number at any buttress was reduced to three, as in the case of the transverse rib and the two ogives. Rodrigo has nothing to say on this point.

23. *Id.*, p. 178. "Lo que se ha de procurar en un templo es que los arcos sean delgados, la razon de lo cual trataremos adelante con el favor de Dios, y esto conviene que sean asi, porque quien ofende á los estribos es los arcos, la razon por ser gruesos y pujar derechos contra los estribos, lo cual no hacen á los estribos mal los cruceros ni terceletes, asi por ser delgados, como por estribar oblicuamente."



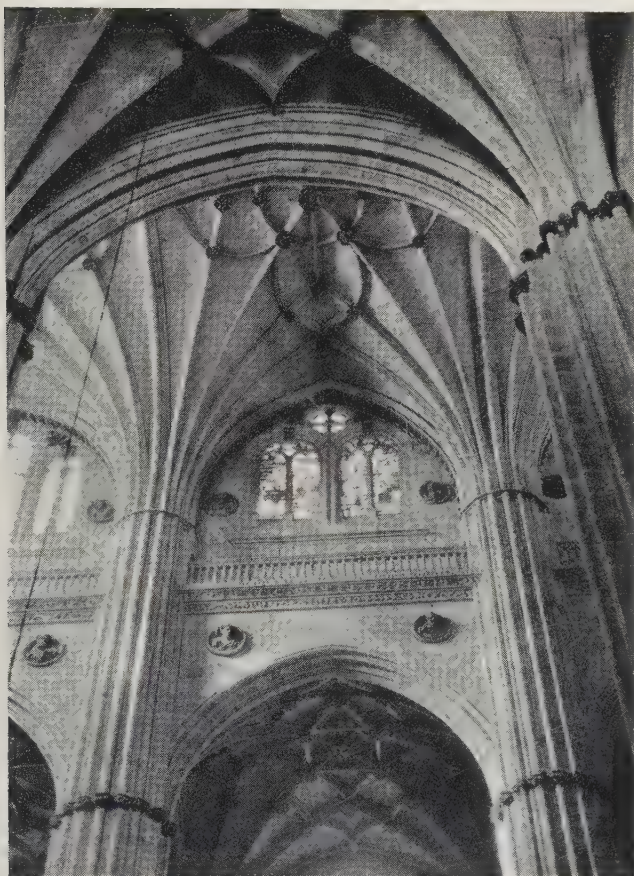


FIG. 5. — Clerestory and nave vaulting, about 1560. — New Cathedral, Salamanca, Spain. *Courtesy of Arthur Byne.*

the substantial haunches and rib clusters. In the extrados of the vault, moreover, the haunches of the clusters of ribs usually dip below the level of any keystone. The extrados presents the appearance of more or less domical surfaces, rising from the rib haunches to the main keystone in the peak of the ogival ribs.

In many particulars this vault differs radically from the North European rib vaults of the XIII and XIV Centuries. These older Gothic vaults presented level summit lines, both transverse and longitudinal, instead of the undulating sequence of "domical" plates in the XVI Century nave vaults. The XIII Century examples offered extremely steep extrados surfaces from haunch to keystone; the keystones were all located in the same horizontal plane, at maximum altitude; and the component ribs in

each bay formed different grades of pointed arches over a plan that was generally rectangular. In XVI Century Spain, however, the ribs form very lightly broken or nearly round-headed arches; the bays they span are roughly square; and the individual vaults approach "domical" form much as in the North French Gothic monuments of the second half of the XII Century. In Spain, such large, square-plan, and bulbous rib vaults are confined to the later XV and XVI Centuries. They may be designated as a Renaissance version of the rib-vault.

Rodrigo Gil's methods of computation pertain to this kind of rib-vaulted form. He deprecates the strength of the "oblique" thrusts of the ogives, and insists upon the master thrusts of the transverse rib. It is beneath the only clearly defined groin in the web; the groin at the transverse intersection of the "domical" vault webs.

To the inattentive reader, a non sequitur is apparently present. If, as Rodrigo says, "the elements most offensive to the buttress are the ribs," and if the most offensive of the ribs is the transverse arch, why is it recommended that the trans-

verse rib be given the greatest sectional dimensions, when its thrust, other things being equal, is acknowledged as the most dangerous? Rodrigo strongly urges that the ribs be kept light, all the while specifying the heaviest construction in the line of greatest thrust.<sup>24</sup> The answer is probably that he recognized the fact of maximal work being done by the vaults at their transverse intersection. This was the area needing support: hence the more massive arch. And he surely knew that thick ribs were safe ribs, as in the propositions both of modern static theory and of common sense. This is also to be read from the apparent lightness of Gothic structure, in which maximal volume is enclosed by minimal mass, as in the great cathedrals.

Another important question, however, still remains. Rodrigo Gil says nothing about a computation for the thickness of the rib vault web. Possibly he used a simple rule of thumb, which is not formulated in the published portion of his text. A provocative observation is nevertheless worth comment. Immediately after presenting the rule of computation for rib vault thrusts, he adverts to the problems of calculating the needed buttressing for a vault without ribs. He writes, "I have often attempted to rationalize the buttress needed for any bay, and have never found a rule adequate for me. I have also pursued the inquiry among Spanish and foreign architects, and none appears to have established a rule verified by other than his own judgment. Upon asking how we shall know whether such and such a buttress is enough, we are told that it is needed, but not for what reason. Some take the fourth [of the span], and others arrive [at an estimate] by certain orthogonals, and dare to have confidence. . . ."<sup>25</sup> Rodrigo then gives his own geometrical construction for the thrust of the barrel vault (outlined on pp. 139-140.)

The clear implication is that the thrusts of rib vaulting may be computed accurately, while the thrusts of other types of vault were not adequately rationalized. Can it be that the success of the rib vault rested in part upon this property? Was it the only form of vault in which the play of forces could be calculated, by means of the convenient symbols of the dimensions of the ribs? We have seen that the computation concerns only the rib dimensions, leaving the web to take care of itself. The ribs, rather than the web, were regarded as significant.<sup>26</sup> In the

24. *Id.*, pp. 180-183.

25. *Id.*, pp. 174-175. "*Probado he muchas veces a sacar razon del estribo que habra menester cualquiera forma y nunca hallo regla que me sea suficiente, y tambien lo he probado entre los arquitectos españoles y extranjeros, y ninguno parece alcanzar verificada regla, mas de su solo albedrio; y preguntando por que sabremos ser aquello bastante estribo, se responde porque lo ha menester, mas no por que razon. Unos le dan el  $\frac{1}{4}$  y otros, por ciertas lineas ortogonales lo hacen y se osan encomendar a ello . . .*"

26. A view reached also by ABRAHAM, *Le Rationalisme*, p. 59. ". . . au lieu de partir de surfaces géométriquement déterminées, de surfaces réglées, et d'en déduire les intersections qui seraient des courbes gauches, on part de ces intersections simplifiées, tracées dans un plan avec le compas, et l'on assouplit, l'on modèle les surfaces d'intrados à la demande de ces lignes de pénétration arbitraires." But ABRAHAM considered this a perversion of right practice ("*Le problème est pris, en quelque sorte, à rebours*"), and he did not perceive the possibilities for calculation by the medieval architect.



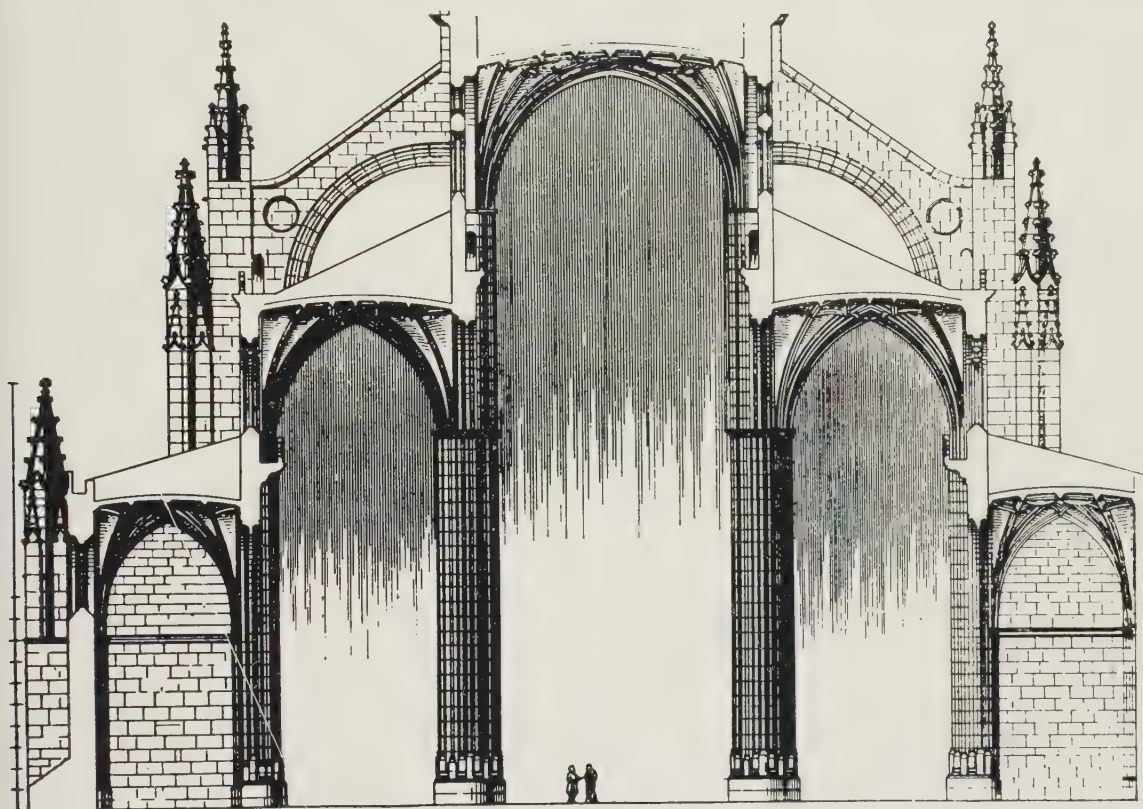


FIG. 6. — New Cathedral, Salamanca, Spain. — Cross-section of nave and aisles. — (After DEHIO AND VON BEZOLD).

absence of ribs, the thrusts of the vault could not be computed exactly, in Rodrigo's experience.

#### — IV —

Rodrigo's minuscule and fragmentary record of the builder's intention may now be summarized. If the decision to build a rib vault was present (and he gives us no explicit analysis of the relative advantages of the various vaulting techniques), then the builder computed the thrusts, not in terms of the web, but in terms of the rib thrusts themselves. The symbolic expression of the vault thrusts is found in the number, length, and behavior of the ribs. Where a "domical" plate was involved, the maximal thrusts were thought to occur in the transverse ribs. The use of the rib system necessitated a far thicker buttressing than in vaults without ribs.

This analysis by Rodrigo differs considerably from the interpretations given by the participants in the recent controversy. The Spaniard says nothing that would document the modern idea of the rib as a "conductor of forces." The concept of elasticity is, of course, alien to him, although his argument that the

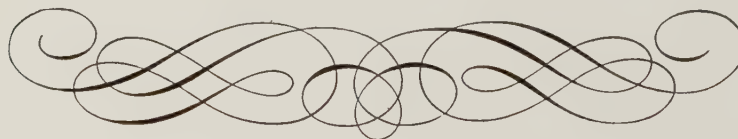


transversals be given a great sectional dimension is, as Professor Panofsky points out, "in agreement with Masson and all modern statics, not in spite of but because of the fact that he wants to diminish the lateral thrust."<sup>27</sup> Abraham's contention that the transverse ribs could be removed without affecting the stability of the vault would strike Rodrigo as a dangerous fantasy. The suggestion that the ogive is more critical than the transverse rib pertains only to special cases, and does not correspond to the Spaniard's sense of the master role played by the transverse rib. He does not allude to any great advantage of provisional utility in construction; nor has he any explicit concept of the rib as plastic enrichment. On the contrary, he treats the ribs as a system of thrusting arches, and as a symbolic convenience in the mathematical computation of vault thrusts. The requirement of massive transversals, and of more massive buttressing than in other vault types is the most significant revelation he makes concerning Gothic intention.<sup>28</sup>

To interpret his text freely, we might paraphrase him as follows: In the rib vault alone are the advantages of exact computations to be secured, but at the price of additional buttressing.

January, 1946.

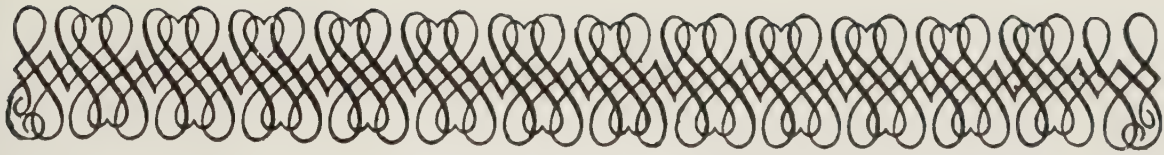
GEORGE KUBLER.



27. *In litteris*, Nov. 26, 1946.

28. Compare the remarks by PHILIBERT DELORME in his *Architecture*, Book III, p. 107: the rib vault "... requiert grande boutée, c'est à dire grande force pour servir de poulser et faire les arcs-boutants, afin de tenir l'oeuvre serrée, ainsi qu'on le voit aux grandes églises ..." (Cited from ABRAHAM, *Le Rationalisme*, 1934, p. 53). On supports and buttressing, RODRIGO GIL adds the following remarks (*Op. cit.*, pp. 173, 178-79): "volviendo á tratar de la groseza de los pilares, digo que se tomen los piés que tienen por el ancho la nave mayor que son cuarenta y treinta que tiene la capilla esta columna que son cuarenta piés y serán ciento diez, la raíz cuadrada de ciento diez serán diez  $10\frac{10}{21}$  avos, su mitad son cinco  $5\frac{5}{21}$  avos, tanto tenga de diámetro la tal columna por la parte de abajo ..."

"El estribo no solamente sustenta á el arco de su ca sustenta el dicho pilar con el estribo que está fuera en las cuales si fueren hechas á un alto, ayúdale mucho el arco de la una á la otra, como el de la colateral á la mayor, mas si fuere más baja la colateral que la mayor, el pilar sobre que carga há menester más grueso que cuando va la una al peso de la otra ... Y que lo supremo de la colateral, sea el arco que topa con la mayor á manera de capialzada, y de esta manera no há menester tan grueso el pilar, que se sustenta el dicho pilar con el estribo que está fuera en las paredes; donde há menester más estribo es en los piés, porque le encomendamos toda la furia de toda la obra."



# AD TRIANGULUM AD QUADRATUM



FIG. 1. — Trondheim Cathedral as reconstructed by Macody Lund, exclusive of the nave. — The proportions of height and length are like those of Klinte Church (fig. 12).

IN a short, elegantly instructive study, Henri Focillon (in *L'Art des Sculpteurs Romains*, Paris, 1931) points out that the *Album* of Villard de Honnecourt is not a collection of accidental notes and observations, but systematic propaganda for the importance of geometry to every artist's work.

Inscribing simple geometrical designs in human figures, Villard lays bare the essential structure of a face or of a body, commenting thereon that such skeleton lines are good *por legierement ouver* (to work easy). He repeatedly underlines the value of mathematics. "Geometry," he says, "is an art, which must be highly considered." He calls geometry a captain of design and of architecture. The following words, written on the first page, may be regarded as the title of his

book: *Wilars de Honecort vos salue . . . en cest livre puet on trover grant concel de le grant force de maçonnerie et des engiens de carpenterie, et si troverés le force de la portraiture, les trais, ensi come li ars de jometrie le commande et ensaigne* — as Geometry commands and teaches.

Focillon's observations certainly throw light upon artistic creation wherever found and in all times, but especially they give a clue to medieval art. Medieval artists not only used the geometrical backbone in order to make design and constructions easier, *por legierement ovrer*, but they even emphasized the *jometrie*; they let the curve or the triangle, the sphere or the cube or whatever mathematical

abstract figure they had used as a skeleton, shine through the details of the pencil, the chisel or of the masonry. And among all medieval ages the Gothic was the most geometrically-minded, which explains the linearism of Gothic art.

The geometrical help-constructions, especially in Gothic architecture have long since attracted the attention of scholars. The study therein, however, was hitherto not regarded as a normal and natural ingredient of the analysis of a building.

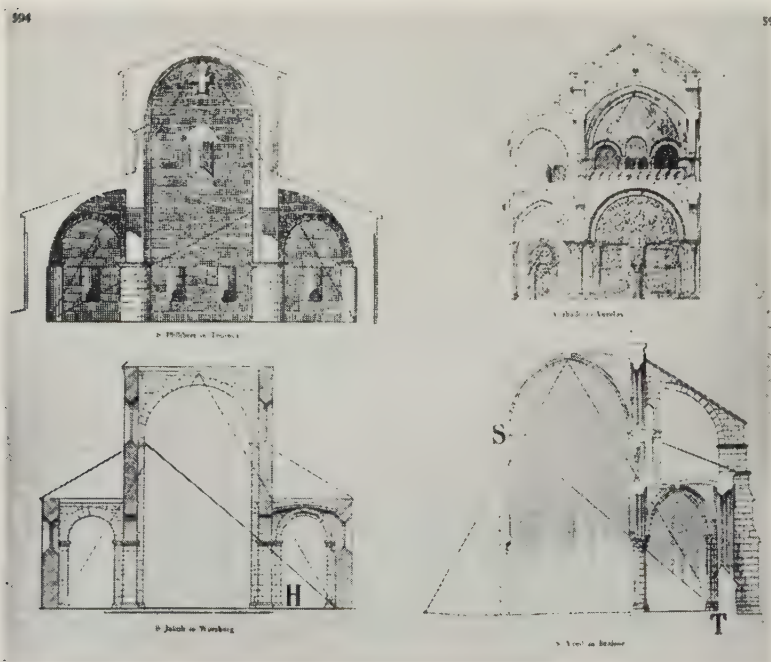


FIG. 2. — Proportions of interiors fixed by an equilateral triangle: St. Philibert in Toulouse; Vézelay, entrance hall; St. Jakob, Würzburg; St. Yved in Braine.

Endeavors in that direction are, on the contrary, often even derided as a sort of superstition.<sup>1</sup>

S. Boisserée, in his monograph on the Cathedral of Cologne,<sup>2</sup> points out the importance of the equilateral triangle in the proportioning of that building.

Viollet-le-Duc gives a standard article on *Proportion* in his Dictionary<sup>3</sup> discerning three types of triangles as help-constructions for the proportions between breadth and height, namely A) right-angled isosceles, B) the "Egyptian isosceles"<sup>4</sup>

1. Cf. WILHELM WANSCHER, *Arkitekturens Historie*, II, Copenhagen, 1929, p. 417 ss.

2. SULPICE BOISSERÉE, *Geschichte und Beschreibung des Domes von Cöln*, Stuttgart, 1823, 2d. ed., Munich, 1842.

3. E. VIOULET-LE-DUC, *Dictionnaire Raisoné de l'Architecture*, Vol. VII, Paris, 1875, p. 532.

4. The "Egyptian" is handy to construct, if you divide the base into four even parts and give to the perpendicular, drawn from the middle of the base to the top of the triangle, two and a half of the named parts.



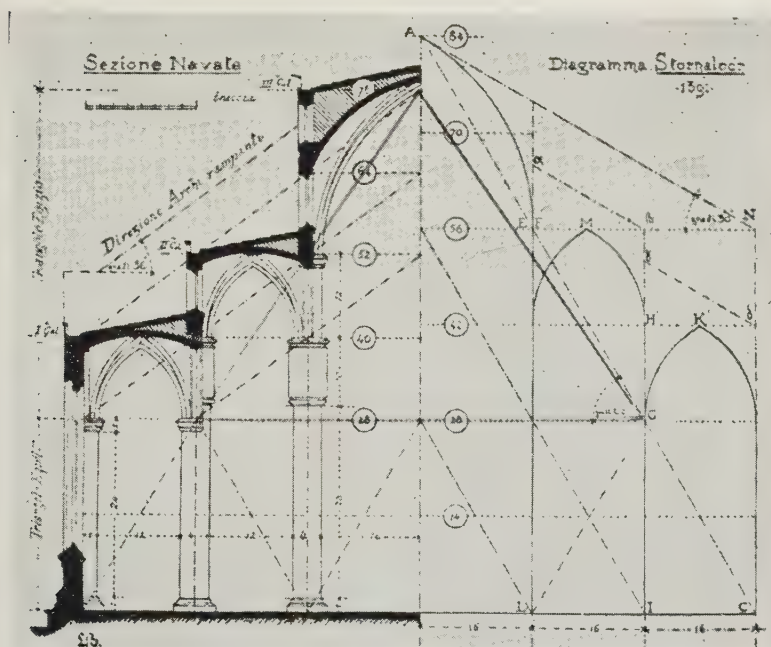


FIG. 3. — Section of the Cathedral in Milano. To the right a planned section with the height fixed by an equilateral triangle, to the left the executed work where the level of upper capitals, etc., is fixed by a lower triangle.

Examples from here and there are not convincing. One may well agree in principle with this great connoisseur of Gothic French architecture, only the practical working through of his ideas needs a more thorough-going documentation, which will probably exceed the capacity of one single man.<sup>5</sup>

Dehio and von Bezold<sup>6</sup> laid a reasonable ground for further studies by thirteen important pages plus illustrations. There we learn among other things that the equilateral triangle fixes the relation between the height and breadth of the interior in a great number of

5. Cf. EINAR DYGGVE, article on *Julius Fredrik Macody Lund*, in: *Salmonsens Leksikontidskrift*, Copenhagen, 1944, column 1021.

6. G. DEHIO AND G. VON BEZOLD, *Die kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes*, II, Stuttgart, 1901, pp. 563-570, 593-599; pp. 528-532. Further literature is quoted there p. 562 sq.

and c) the equilateral. Based on his great practical experience he saw in them the *triangles acceptés par les architectes du Moyen Age comme générateurs de proportions*. He gives some examples in his ordinary lucid way.

Nevertheless we must suspect him of proving too much when he lets the whole system of capitals and bases and keystones in a church be regulated by the same angles which fix the height of the main vaults.

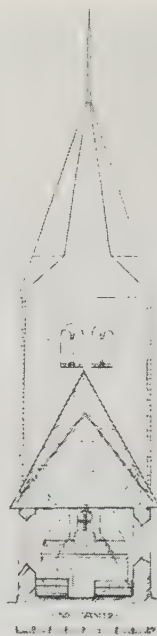


FIG. 4. — Akeböck Church, Gottland, Sweden. — Section through the nave toward the west. The elder roof visible beneath the actual, represents the state of the XII Century: it has the form of the "Egyptian triangle." The triangle in the interior, which fixes the height of the hammerbeam, is equilateral.



FIG. 5. — Hejnum Church, Gottland, Sweden. — Chancel doorway, early Gothic work by the Stonemaster Lafrans Botvidarson, middle of the XIII Century. The gable is nearly an "Egyptian triangle."

ought to be raised according to the square or the triangle? And the answer was: *Declanaverunt quod ipsa posset ascendere usque ad triangulum sive usque ad figuram triangularem et non ultra* (the church may ascend until the triangle or to the triangular figure and not above!)

The measuring *ad quadratum* is easy to understand: the height of the interior has to be its breadth. The meaning of *ad triangulum* is given by draught (Fig. 3, the right half), appended to a verdict by an expert (1391), an architect and geometer Stornaloco, where the equilateral triangle functions (exactly as in our above-quoted instance Fig. 2). Construction

churches. Byzantine, Carolingian, Romanesque and Gothic, especially the earliest Gothic (St. Philibert in Toulouse, St. Yved in Braisne, etc.) (Fig. 2).

The fact of triangulation in general and of other geometrical methods cannot be denied. Not only are many measured real and clear instances published, but extensive documentary proofs from the XIV Century give eloquent witness.

At the architects' meeting in Milan in 1392 the following question was on the program: *Utrum ecclesia ipsa . . . debeat ascendere ad quadratum an ad triangulum?* In the question of how to perform the building of the Cathedral of Milan, the problem was whether this church

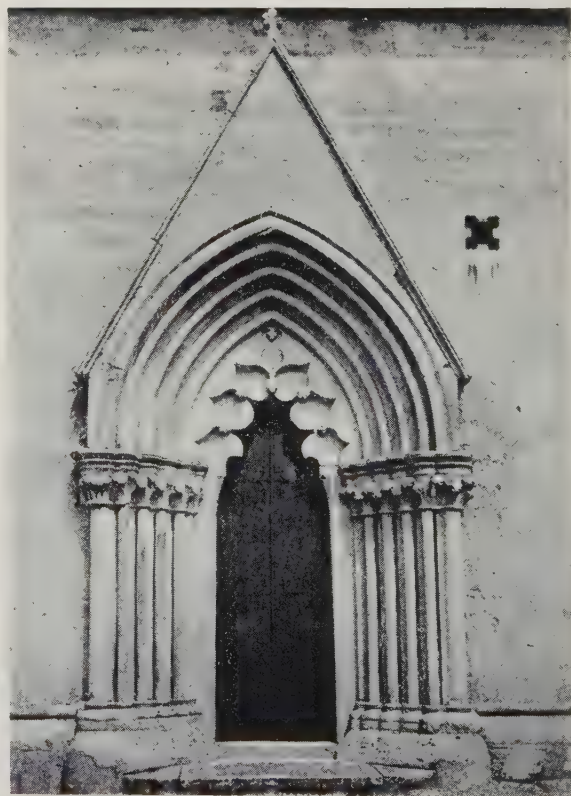


FIG. 6. — Sanda Church, Gottland, Sweden. — Chancel doorway from the end of the XIII Century. The gable is equilateral.



*ad triangulum* results in a lower interior than *quadratum* and so was the building made until the level of the minor capitals. Higher up the construction went on with even more cautiousness resulting in a lower vaulting (Fig. 3, left half). Even in this region the proportions are fixed by a special triangle—higher than the Egyptian but decidedly lower than the equilateral one. That is according to Dehio and von Bezold's interpretation of the meaning of the words *ad figuram triangularem*.

Research in big scale was done by the Norwegian historian F. Macody Lund. He went in for methodological studies in connection with the problem of how to restore the Cathedral of Trondheim,<sup>7</sup> Norway's most venerable building. He makes a tremendous endeavor to disentangle the whole question of medieval help-constructions. He seeks and finds everywhere squares, different triangles and the relation between linear quantities called *sectio aurea*. The proportion of the golden section  $[\sqrt{5} + 1) : 2 = \text{roughly} = 8:5]$  is obtained by tracing a pentagram. Fascinated by the idea of pentagrams and pentagones as dominant dictators of all proportions, Macody Lund covers façades, sections and plans by complicated reticulations. He had the optimistic confidence that the enormous gape in the for-centuries-ruined Cathedral of Trondheim could be genuinely reconstructed by means of speculations in



FIG. 7. — Endre Church, Gottland, Sweden. — Doorway of the nave, about 1300, High Gothic Period.

7. FREDRIK MACODY LUND, *Ad Quadratum*, London, 1921, p. 344 sq.



the way of squares and pentagons. But his observations on the *sectio aurea* may be left out. Without pronouncing any judgment, we wish only to mention that this part of his book is difficult to understand and has been strongly criticized. He may be partly right, he may be totally wrong in his passionate interest in pentagons; we only want to stress his merit in increasing our knowledge of medieval help-constructions *ad triangulum* and *ad quadratum*. He was first encouraged by the authorities and financially supported by the government, but finally, defeated by the architectural experts, his studies were officially pronounced as having no importance to the restoration work at the National Sanctuary in Trondheim.

This is indeed a long introduction to the few facts about some small country churches of the Swedish island of Gottland, which I intended to present in this article, without further comments. But comments soon appeared unavoidable, because the works of modest stone-masters of Gottland turned out to be inseparably connected with the deeds of the great architects of the metropolitan temples of Europe.

Working on the history of Gottland's Medieval architecture, I have noticed metrological and proportional rules or customs of more than local interest, of which some points will be related.<sup>8</sup>

The great majority of the churches of the island of Gottland were built between about 1200 and 1361. The residents of the country parishes then had a period of rare prosperity. The only town of Gott-

land, Visby, also had a prosperous time and an interesting architecture. But town and city are separated units. There are, of course, mutual influences and common features, but in root and ground there is a decided difference, based on facts of nationality. Visby had a strong German element. The country population was pure Swedish. The very existence of Visby as a town is generally explained by the enterprising spirit of Westphalian traders from the middle of the XII Century on. Visby is even the starting point of the German commercial union called the Hansa, the center of which later on was moved to Lübeck.

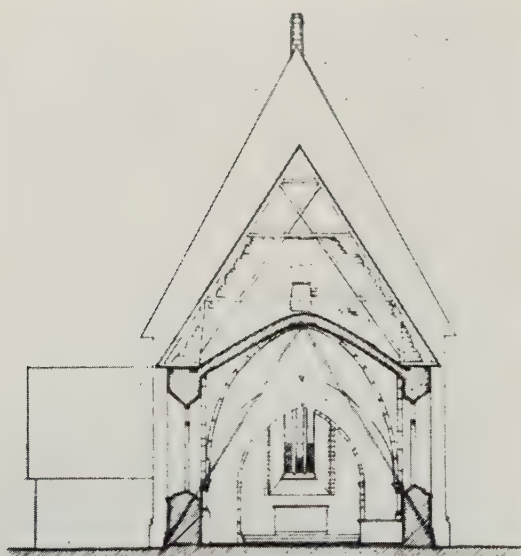


FIG. 8. — Hejde Church, Gottland, Sweden. — Nave from the middle of the XIII Century. The equilateral triangle, which fixes the height of the vault includes the thickness of the walls.

8. In the author's *Swedish Art* (Kahn Lectures, 1929), Princeton, 1932, the greater part of the illustrated instances of Medieval art are taken from Gottland. Cf. also ROOSVAL, *Die Kirchen Gottlands*, Stockholm, 1911; *Den-Gotländske Ciceronen*, Stockholm, 1926, and the very explicit inventory of ecclesiastical art: *Sveriges Kyrkor*, Gottland, 6 vols. (country churches), of which three were published, the last three being in preparation for the press.

But the Gottlandic peasants had many centuries before then exercised mercantile activity abroad. The important commercial road over Novgorod to the Black Sea was used by them. The Germans imitated the traditional commercial roads of the Swedes and finally in competition beat them, being backed by infinitely stronger forces in the home country and being superior in more modern commercial technique. In a word: town and country were two different powers; once, in 1288, even meeting in open war. The year 1361 marks the end of church building in rural parishes. It was the time of a ravaging Danish military invasion which, added to the press of the overwhelming German rivalry in trade, struck the country population with poverty.

These pure Gottlanders had their own prides, there own secular traditions, their own ideals in art. The functions of a country church are also different from those of an urban one. We understand without many words the tendency to homogeneity in the hundreds of country churches, concentrated on the surface of a small island and in a period of 160 years.

Of the XI and XII Centuries only a few complete churches (though many fragments of churches) are left, all fine mason works, but all on a very small scale. The buildings of the XIII and XIV Centuries, when the prosperity of the island caused the new general constructing of churches already mentioned, are considerably bigger.

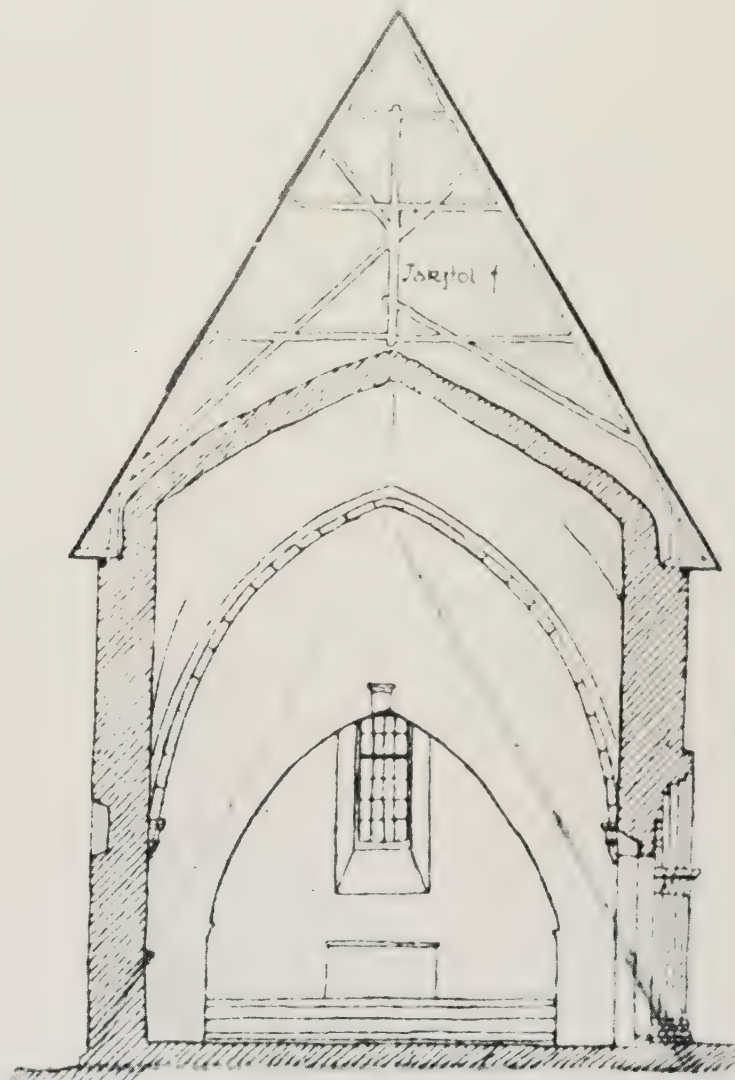


FIG. 9. — Lokrume Church, Gottland, Sweden. — Section of the nave towards the east. The equilateral triangle touches the wall arch, the vault is considerably higher. About 1270-1280.

A. THE GABLES. The gables before about 1200 were designed as "Egyptian" triangles or still lower. In Akeböck church (Fig. 4) there is a trace of a lower roof from the middle of the XII Century. It has the proportions of the Egyptian triangle. The actual more pointed roof is equilateral. This was laid after 1200. Then the material is abundant and we find that PRACTICALLY EVERY GABLE BUILT BETWEEN 1200 AND THE MIDDLE OF THE XIV CENTURY IS AN EQUILATERAL TRIANGLE. There are hundreds of these. The roofs and their trusses are timbered according to the same triangle.

B. THE DOORWAYS. The Gothic principal doorways from the 1240's onward, were crowned by gablets. A few, principally among the earliest, are like the Egyptian triangle (Fig. 5) but the great majority are equilateral (Fig. 6). There are hundreds of them, as well as of the gables. Accordingly, the masons and carpenters of the epoch were, so to speak, drilled in producing equilaterals. Until our day that geometrical figure, visible on naves, chancels, vestries, gateways, lychgates, gives a special note to the whole Gottlandic landscape, which is a miraculously well conserved scenery of medieval art. A small percentage of exceptions from the "equilateral rule" is offered by the gablets of the High Gothic period from the beginning of the XIV Century: they are more pointed (side to base near, 8:5 [Fig. 7]). It should be noted that the part of all gateways which is underneath the gablet is to be circumscribed by a regular square (Figs. 5, 6 and 7): "*ad quadratum*."

C. THE SECTIONS. The height of a roof in a XII Century nave is fixed by an equilateral triangle, the base of which covers the breadth of the interior — this, however, does not include the walls (Fig. 4).

In earliest Gothic buildings the height of the vault is fixed by an equilateral triangle; its base covers the breadth of the building, walls included; its top reaches the vault (Fig. 8).

In the second half of the XIII Century the base of the triangle also covers the total breadth of the nave, walls included, but the top of the triangle marks the level of the wall arch. The vault then rises much higher (Fig. 9).

In one single case in the latest of all rural church-buildings, the chancel of Hejde (Fig. 10) vault and gable

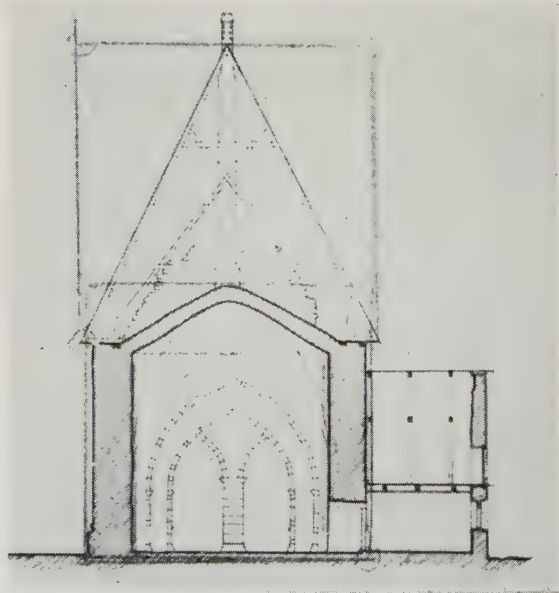


FIG. 10. — Hejde Church, Gottland, Sweden. — Section of the chancel towards west. Proportions of exterior and interior fixed by regular squares. After the middle of the XIV Century.



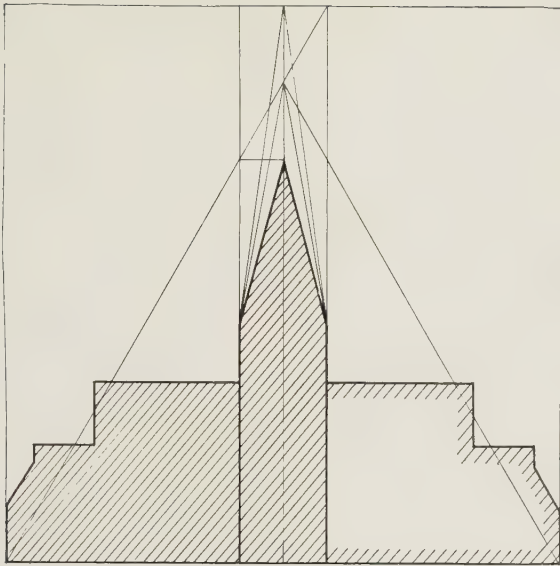


FIG. 11. — Akeböck Church, Gottland, Sweden. — Height of spire and pool fixed by triangulation. Triangle = a half equilateral one. Height of stone work of tower fixed by measuring length of church behind the tower. Beginning of the XIII Century. In the eldest triangulations the basis of the triangle was = the length of the church east of the tower. In this figure the author has let the triangle grow, showing the two other variations of the rule of triangulation for towers' height. During the greater part of the XIII Century the basis is made = the length of the church + the half extent of the tower. In the XIV Century the basis is = the total length of the church. — Observe, that this schematic design of the section of a country church is completed into the design of a cathedral with central tower. For the meaning hereof see page 156.

In France, the home of Gothic in a constructional sense, the elastic spread of the triangle took place in more graduations than we are able to observe in our country churches, as shown by the following annotations made with the help of plates in Dehio and von Bezold's great handbook.

1. — Cathedral of Sens: triangle inside the walls rises to the key-stone of the vault.  
Cathedral of Le Mans: *Ibid.*
2. — Church St. Yved in Braisne:  
*Ibid.* (Fig. 2).  
Vézelay Church (entrance hall): triangle rises to the wall arch (Fig. 2).
3. — Bourges Cathedral: triangle includes the walls but not the buttresses, rises to the vault.

are determined by a new principle: *ad quadratum*. A square characterizes the interior (up to the level of the wall arch and of the walls); a square circumscribes the whole masonry including the vault; the gable is inscribed in a square.

D. GOTTLANDIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECTIONAL TRIANGLE IS PARALLEL TO THE CORRESPONDING EVOLUTION IN THE GREAT FRENCH GOTHIC.

These instances suggest that the triangle was a formula for the safety of the vaulting construction, a formula which changed slightly following the improvements in the vaulting technique. It is a natural development of ideas when the help-triangle, so to say, widens itself according to the possibility of raising the vault. This is paralleled by the development in continental church architecture.

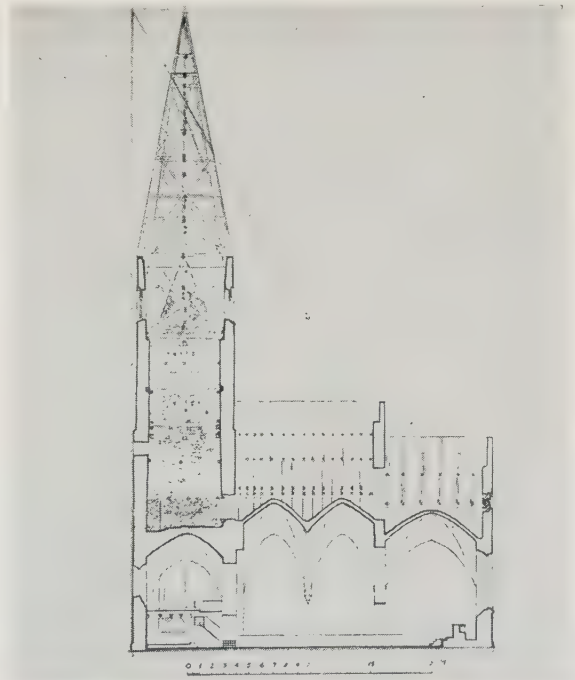


FIG. 12. — Klinte Church, Gottland, Sweden. — Tower of the XIV Century.



FIG. 13. — Trondheim Cathedral. — Reconstruction of side elevation by Christie.

Chartres Cathedral: *Ibid.*

4. — Cathedral of Chalons: the equilateral triangle includes walls and buttresses.

Church of St. Denis: *Ibid.*

Cathedral of Reims: *Ibid.*

Cathedral of Tournay: *Ibid.*

5. — Cathedral of Amiens: no triangle; a regular square of the breadth of the building includes buttresses; base on the level of the pillar socles, reaches to the height of the vault: *ad quadratum*.

Beauvais Chancel: *Ibid.*

#### E. GOTTLANDIC TOWERS.

Back in Gottland. Now to the churchtowers. They are, of course, the more conspicuous element when compared to the gables, but their number is relatively smaller. Anyhow, there are enough Gothic spires among the fields and woods to give decided accent to the picture.

They are proportioned by a certain system or rather by three related systems, different from the corresponding rule of the Romanesque period.

Before about 1200, so far as the monuments permit an observation, the height of a tower, exclusive of the low pyramidal roof, was equal to the length of the church east of the tower. In the Transitional epoch the towers often follow the



FIG. 14. — Salisbury Cathedral from the northeast.

same rule on behalf of the mason work (Fig. 11). Earlier the basis is = the length of the church except the tower. But the spires have already accepted the high-pointed Gothic style. The total height was, during the greater part of the XIII Century, fixed in the following way. You count the length from the middle of the tower to the eastern end of the chancel. Take that eastern end point to the center of a circle with a radius equal to the double of the length before mentioned. Where the periphery meets the axis of the tower, there the apex of the spire has to be (Fig. 11). Later, probably about 1320-1361, the rule was modified with the intention of raising the height extremely. As base for the calculation the whole length of the church was chosen, whereupon the construction followed as stated before (Fig. 12). So, in both constructions the essential shape of the church's profile is defined by a right-angled triangle standing upon the smaller of its katets and this katet being half of the hypotenuse. All three systems are illustrated by Fig. 11.

#### F. *Ad. Quadratum?*

The square which regulates the plans of so many great Medieval churches, cannot be said to be the constitutive element of Gothic Gottlandic country churches' plans, except for the plan of the tower, where the square is practically obligatory.



The chancel may often be a square, the nave sometimes approaches it but, as a rule, does not quite attain it. On the other hand, the square, as already said, decidedly enters into the composition of the great doorways.

G. HOW TO EXPLAIN THE PROPORTIONING OF THE TOWERS? PARALLELS IN TRONDHEIM?

The method here detected for the proportioning of the Gottlandic towers of the Gothic is a sort of triangulation. But the triangle is not one of the regular ones, neither equilateral nor isosceles. That a little provincial architectural school chooses formulas of such originality without any prototype among the more prominent works, demands an explanation.

Explanation is given by the triangle itself. As the base is the half length of the hypotenuse, the figure is half of an equilateral triangle. May I ask the Gentle Reader to make the experiment of doubling the triangle of Figs. 11 and 12 so that an equilateral triangle arises and also doubling the contours of nave and chancel. We see then the easily recognizable scheme of an English cathedral with central tower.

I guess that the little country church regarded half of a cathedral's silhouette (Fig. 1) as sufficient; (the tower, of course, was taken undivided).

In Scandinavia there is now only one building of that English type: the Cathedral dedicated to Saint Olav in Trondheim. Analyzing the side view as reconstructed by the architect Christie (Fig. 13), we find the spire rising according to the same proportional feeling as the spires of second in height of Fig. 11. I suppose that Christie fixed the height of the spire by means of an equilateral triangle, the base of which was equal to the length of the church, exclusive of the ambulatory of the octogon and the front towers.

Macody Lund, in his already mentioned great book on medieval geometrical help-constructions, rejected Christie's design because he regarded it as founded on triangulation according to the equilateral. True, he approved of Christie in a general way, as one who worked with method and who "was well acquainted with the theory of proportion of Viollet-le-Duc, and it is from this that he used the equilateral triangle, when proportioning the principal divisions, its transverse section, its front, its height of ridge and its spire — but as it happens the cathedral is not built *ad triangulum* but *ad quadratum*, as we have undeniably proved . . ."

Here we completely ignore the question of whether the whole cathedral was designed *ad quadratum* or *ad triangulum*. Probably the answer cannot be given by a single formula. We also completely ignore the problems of the practical restoration work which now is in process and where other points of view than the historical must also be considered.

We are here limiting ourselves to the historical interests alone and are asking: was Christie right in proportioning only the tower *ad triangulum*? Look at England, the source of the Gothic architecture in Norway. The outstanding pattern



FIG. 15. — Trondheim Cathedral as reconstructed *ad quadratum* by Macody Lund.

ture. So there is a verisimilitude that Christie was right; not that such a spire was actually built in Trondheim, but that the idea of a spire rising to that height existed in the plans of the XIII Century.

Was Macody Lund right when proportioning his tower *ad quadratum* (Figs. 15 and 16)? It is impossible to say yes or no. But as we know that *ad quadratum* was systematically used when a more developed Gothic called for increased verticality in the interior, for instance in Amiens and Beauvais, and, as we know that in Milan the *quadratum* was quoted as a symbol of unheard-of daring in height in the interior, and as we have also seen the *quadratum* in Hejde (Fig. 10) — we must then admit that a tower, proportioned like in Fig. 1, was possible, if not in reality, then in planning, or at least in the debates among leading circles in Trondheim about 1300.

If this is so, if both Christie and Lund are right — Christie for an earlier epoch, Lund for a later — then we stand before a remarkable parallelism between Gottland and Trondheim. They both went over from triangular to square in reference to the height of towers. And if that were so, then the inspiration must have

of a spired central tower is that at Salisbury with the highest spire in England: about 124 metres or 404 English feet (Fig. 14). The distances to both ends of the cathedral, measured from the middle axis of the tower is about 72 resp. 76 metres. Choosing the minor figure as the half base of an equilateral triangle, we shall find that the apex of the Salisbury spire fits into the top of that triangle.

The Salisbury tower is of the XIV Century, though having formed part of the original XIII Century design. So we are entitled to use it as an indication of English theory even in the XIII Cen-



come from the Norwegian cathedral to the Gottlandic country churches — “on the pilgrimage road,” as Arthur Kingsley Porter said.

It doesn't matter that the Gottlanders even in reference to the highest towers seemingly practised a triangular technique, not *ad quadratum* in their calculation of the tower's height. The result is, by the average horizontal length of the west-

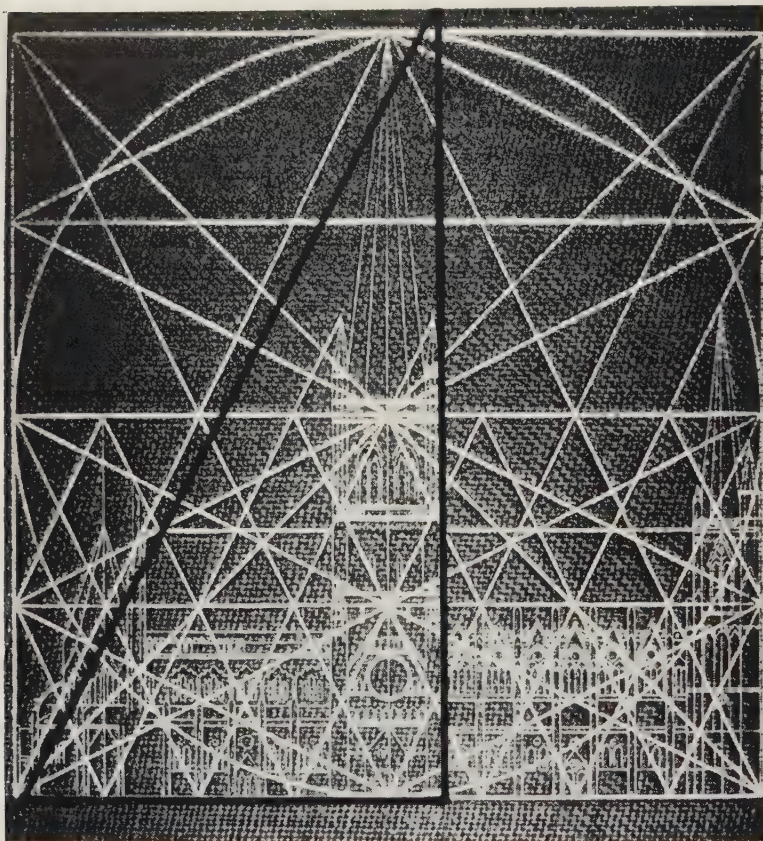


FIG. 16. — Trondheim Cathedral, side view as reconstructed *ad quadratum* by Macody Lund. — Approximately the same height of the spire may be attained by another method, a triangulation like the one of Klinte Church (fig. 12). The triangulation lines are not quite correctly drawn. Give the hypotenuse exactly the double length of the basis, then the point of the triangle will touch the upper side of the big square.

heim and our island. It stands because of its very nature of being supported by measurable facts and so it is a small but not unimportant addition to the knowledge of geometrical help-constructions in medieval architecture.

towers of Gottland in comparison to the churches' length, the same as if there were a central-tower for a church of double the length in the Gottlandic and as if the proportioning were effected by a square.

And if that were so, then the discussions in the shops of Gottlandic churchbuilders were an echo of the debates within the fabric of Trondheim's Cathedral.

What a cardhouse of hypotheses built in layers one upon the other! Just so, and this has no other pretensions. But our account of Gottlandic proportioning cannot be affected by the maintenance or fall of the idea of parallelism between Trond-



# XIII CENTURY SCULPTURE

## AT NOYON

### AND THE DEVELOPMENT

### OF THE GOTHIC CARYATID\*

EVERY moment spent with Henri Focillon was a privilege to be treasured. I remember in particular one day in 1937 while he was directing my studies in Paris, when he came out to Noyon where I was working on the Cathedral as a thesis subject. Like everything he did, he endowed the occasion with his entire attention and with an earnestness and selflessness enhanced as well as lightened by his wit. I was made for that day his host, and as "Monseigneur de Noyon," it was my duty to act as a guide in the Cathedral which he knew instinctively far better than I could ever know it after months of grubbing work. Nothing escaped his attention; I had thought of him as near-sighted until that time, but the details of a capital or a moulding high up under the vaults were miraculously as

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\*The term "caryatid" is strictly applicable to a standing female figure bearing a load on the head. It is used here loosely, in preference to at times more technically correct "atlas" or "telamon," to denote a bearing figure in a general sense regardless of sex or pose. This conforms to earlier authoritative usage in treating Medieval material, for example: VIOLLET-LE-DUC, *Dictionnaire Raisoné de l'Architecture du Moyen-Age*, art. *Sommier*, VIII, p. 451.



FIG. 1. — Noyon, West Lateral Portal. — Caryatid. Phot. Gindrat, Noyon.

plain to him as a base or column within hand's reach. One of the subjects under most intense fire was what we called the "lost sculpture" of Noyon — the great ensembles of the XII and XIII Centuries which had disappeared during the Revolution and during the course of the War of 1914-1918. In the midst of intangibles, however important historically, there was no little satisfaction in finding the XII Century masks in the choir tribunes still in place, although as evidence of the quality of the lost portal sculpture they were indicative but not conclusive.<sup>1</sup> Similarly well-preserved remains on the west front, done about a century later, intrigued him almost as much. These he would not permit me to publish in my thesis which had to do rigorously only with the art of the XII Century at Noyon. "They will do for an article later on," he urged. The paragraphs which follow are not so much a tribute to him, which I do not think I could put into adequate words, as a continuation of an adventure begun in his company and inspired by his friendly, almost paternal, interest.

1. Published, with HENRI FOCILLON's advice and help, as *Têtes Gothiques de la Cathédrale de Noyon*, in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," 1937, pp. 137-142.



The west front of the Cathedral of Noyon was begun about 1200. The campaign of construction included the spacious hall under the towers, the towers themselves and the porch extending to the depth of a single broad bay in front of the three portals. The original grandiose plan of the façade, including an arcade between the towers and spires above them, was never completed. Sometime after 1235 work was stopped. The portals in so far as they concern the fabric of construction, date between 1200 and 1215. In 1293 the towers and porch were damaged by a serious fire, and it has been assumed that the portal sculpture was replaced soon after. Evidence supporting that theory appeared to be present in the interpolation of decorative elements into the fabric of original construction, such as screens of elaborate diaper work, a frieze of deeply undercut foliage and capitals of a style obviously later than 1215. Even the lintels and jambs of the portals seemed to belong to this later work, presumably done after the great fire of 1293. The tympanum sculpture and the statues which once flanked the portals were all but completely destroyed, in 1793.<sup>2</sup>

Several small units of the west front decoration, however, escaped the revolutionary hammer because at the time they were covered by false walls of plaster. During the course of restoration in the 1930's the plaster was removed, uncovering intact four figures decorating the corbels supporting the lintels of the two lateral portals. The style of this sculpture (Figs. 1, 3 and 5) is sophisticated and unquestionably of the high standard of the great cathedral centers. It is curious, however, in at least two respects: it is certainly not of the early XIV Century as might be expected, if part of the campaign of repair after 1293; nor is it dateable toward

2. Photographed: Archives Photographiques, Nos. 28789-91. See: E. LEFÈVRE-PONTALIS, *Histoire de la Cathédrale de Noyon*, Nogent-le-Rotrou, 1900, p. 40, also in: *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Chartes*, 1899, pp. 483-484; C. SEYMOUR, JR., *Notre-Dame of Noyon in the Twelfth Century*, Yale University Press, 1939, pp. 65-67, 71-72, 84.



FIG. 2. — Reims, West Front, North Door. — Caryatid under the Smiling Angel. From: MOREAU-NÉLATON, *La Cathédrale de Reims*.



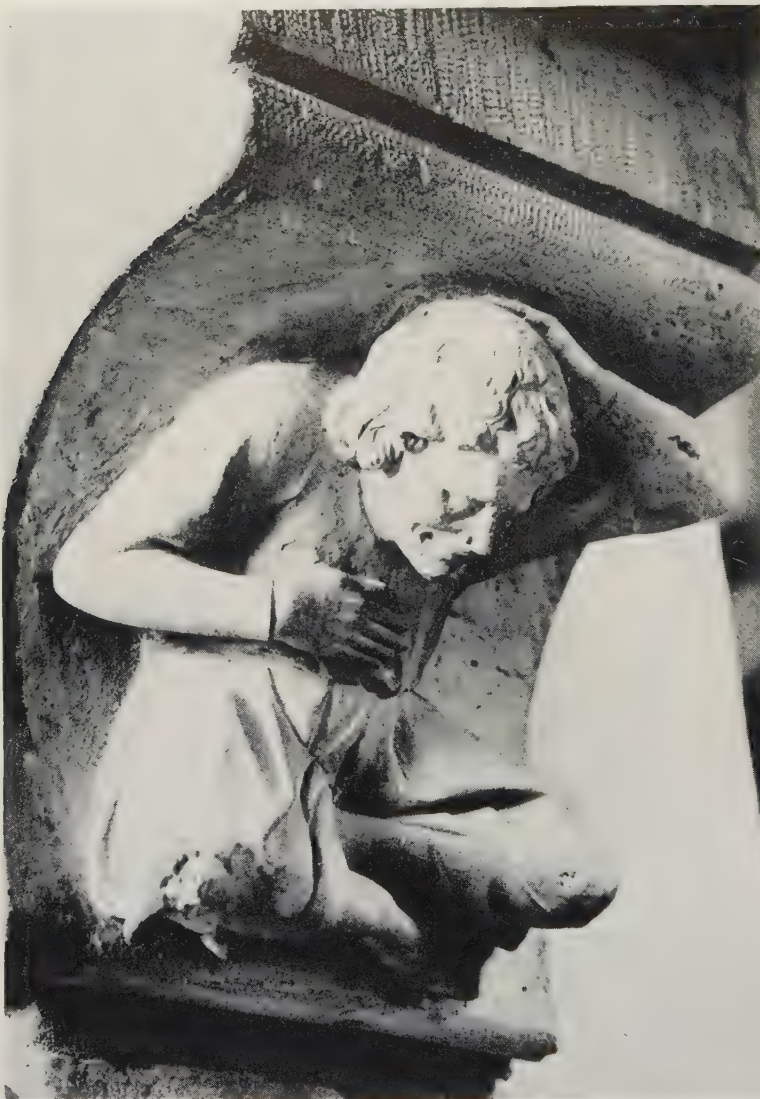


FIG. 3. — Noyon, West Lateral Portal. — Caryatid. Phot. Gindrat, Noyon.

the very early years of the XIII Century, when the lower portions of the west front were constructed.

One of these figures was published by Richard H. L. Hamann in 1935 as a portrait and as an early work of the "Naumburg Master" during his supposed apprenticeship in France about 1220.<sup>3</sup> The similarity in facial style of the bald, determined looking man on the Noyon corbel (Fig. 1) to equally bald personages appearing in a relief at Bassenheim, and on the west choir screen at Mainz was the chief thread in the argument, imaginative certainly, and valuable in more than one suggestion. Omitted in the discussion, however, were the evidence of later interpolation into the orig-

inal fabric and, perhaps more important, an adequate consideration of the remaining figures.

Two of the remaining corbel figures at Noyon are shown here (Figs. 3 and 5). They appear to be contemporary with the figure published by Hamann and I believe it probable that they are by the same hand. The same treatment of

3. See: *Der Naumburger Meister in Noyon*, in: "Zeitschrift des Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft," 1935, pp. 424-429. The thesis that the Naumburg Master as an individual worked for some years in France before his activity in Mainz, Naumburg and Meissen has received numerous accretions over the past two decades. For the most recent summary of the fairly voluminous literature, see: H. BEENKEN, *Der Meister von Naumburg*, Berlin, 1939, pp. 9-12, 156.

proportions, the same modeling of such details as hair and hands, the same drapery style of such comparable areas as the chest and arms, the same feeling for volume and the relation of the figure to voids on the support are present in all three, despite differences of facial type. Two of the figures (Figs. 3 and 5), however, stand closer to more familiar aspects of development in French sculpture during the XIII Century as we have come to know it. In pose and scale they instantly suggest the small, and easily studied figures to be found as a general rule



FIG. 4. — Reims, North Transept, Portal. — Early XIII Century, Caryatid. — From: ROUSSEL, *La Sculpture Gothique*, I.

under the great statues of the XIII Century cathedral portals. The Romantic term "marmosets," which still is used to describe this genre, is singularly inappropriate. There is, to be sure, a touch of the grotesque in one of the Noyon figures which appears to be suffering from acute indigestion. The gesture answers to requirements of design (as will be shown later) and occurs frequently enough, for example, under a statue of the Amiens west front and on a corbel at Reims but in a style at once earlier and somewhat different (Fig. 4). The finesse, the combination of delicacy with monumental strength of the Noyon group as a whole, strongly recalls Reims — but in particular the style of the figures high on the north transept (Fig. 6) or some of the details of the west front, for which a date of approximately 1240-1250 may be given.<sup>4</sup> The question of portraiture should not

4. The chronology of the Reims sculpture is debateable. The *relative* order of the ateliers may be sensed (L. BRÉHIER, *La Cathédrale de Reims*, Paris, 1916, pp. 158-206; E. PANOFKY, in: "Jahrbuch der Kunstwissenschaft," 1927, p. 55 ff.; W. MEDDING, in: "Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen," 1929, p. 299 ff.; P. VITRY, *French Gothic Sculpture, 1226-1270* (PANTHEON edition) 1929, pp. 46-47, 77-83, 86-87). But an *absolute* dating of the various portions of the sculpture is still unavailable, at least in a form which reconciles the French and German schools of thought, the latter tending toward noticeably earlier dating in order, presumably, to accord with the dating

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FIG. 5. — Noyon, West Lateral Portal. — Caryatid. Phot. Gindrat, Noyon.

be taken too seriously; these seem to be stock types including even the bald man, which so struck Hamann's fancy. A version, almost identical in style with the figure at Noyon, appears under (and homogeneously with) the *Smiling Angel* to Saint Nicaise's left on the Reims west front (Fig. 2). There are other bald men at Reims of about the same period; and at Laon, about 1210-1215 there appears an important early study in this form of characterization, also in a caryatid.<sup>5</sup> Finally, there should be mentioned a resemblance as to feature and expression between the Noyon "*Bald Man*" and the *Saint Domitius* of the Portal St. Firmin at Amiens (dateable 1230-1240).<sup>6</sup>

The relationship between the Noyon corbel-figures and the Reims ateliers active during the mid-cen-

of such ensembles as the Bamberg "Adam-Portal" or the *Visitation* (usually ascribed to about 1235) and the Mainz choir-screens (usually taken as 1235-1239), which show the influence of Reims. It may be that the pressure of the early dating of the German sculpture on the Reims problem has been exaggerated: KÜAS' dating of 1260-1270 of certain Meissen sculpture, very close to Mainz in style, is an interesting development ("Jahrbuch der Deutschen Vereins für Kunstwissenschaft," 1937, p. 74). My dating of the Reims caryatid (Fig. 2), is based primarily on the probable date of the famous *Smiling Angel*, nowhere held earlier than 1240 and by some as late as 1260. The caryatid is carved from the same block as the base of the statue, the statue and the column behind it. For the relation of the sculpture to the fabric of the façade, see: H. DENEUX, in: "Bulletin Monumental," 1925, pp. 112-116.

5. ROUSSEL, *La Sculpture Gothique*, I. pl. 33. For Reims, see: MOREAU-NÉLATON, *La Cathédrale de Reims*, 1915, pl. 28; VITRY, *La Cathédrale de Reims*, Paris, 1919, I, pls. LX, LXI.

6. L. LEFRANÇOIS-PILLION, *La Cathédrale d'Amiens*, Paris, 1937, figs. 28, 29, p. 30.



tury, or a decade or so before, offers both a date and a point of origin for the sculptural decoration of the Noyon west front. At this distance from Noyon, it is difficult to go much farther into the problem. However, it is probable that most of the evidence of interpolation may refer to a campaign of decoration toward the mid-XIII Century by a group of imagers from Reims, or at least very strongly under the influence of the Reims ateliers. The architecture of the Chapter House adjoining the west front is in the style of Champagne, and dates shortly before the middle of the century. Another indication that the decoration of the portals was delayed and then executed in a style later than the architecture of the west front itself is the lack of any record of dedication, when we might expect it, about 1230 or slightly before. How much of the portal decoration was damaged in the fire of 1293 and replaced in the early XIV Century is a subject for further research. At all events, the possibility exists that among the fragments of the portal sculpture there may be hitherto unrecognized remains of XIII Century work of the highest quality.<sup>7</sup>

The extant corbel figures at Noyon, however, are sufficient to establish the spread of the Reims style into French provinces adjoining Champagne on the west, a point which adds confirmation to previously suggested influence of the Reims ateliers on the south transept portal at Amiens and offers an interesting counterbalance to the movement of the same

7. A considerable number of fragments from the west portals was discovered during the course of excavations in 1921-1923. These were collected when I saw them last in the attic above the vaults of the Chapter House. It is known that the subject of the central tympanum was the *Last Judgment*, and LEVASSEUR (*Annales de l'Eglise Cathédrale de Noyon*, Paris, Sara, 1633, p. 709) mentions, presumably among others, three large statues which he identified as Saint Eloi, Sainte Godeberthe and "Herod." In 1856 two sizable fragments of a statue representing a bishop, dated then of the XIII Century, were recovered under the north tower ("Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Picardie," VI, p. 247).

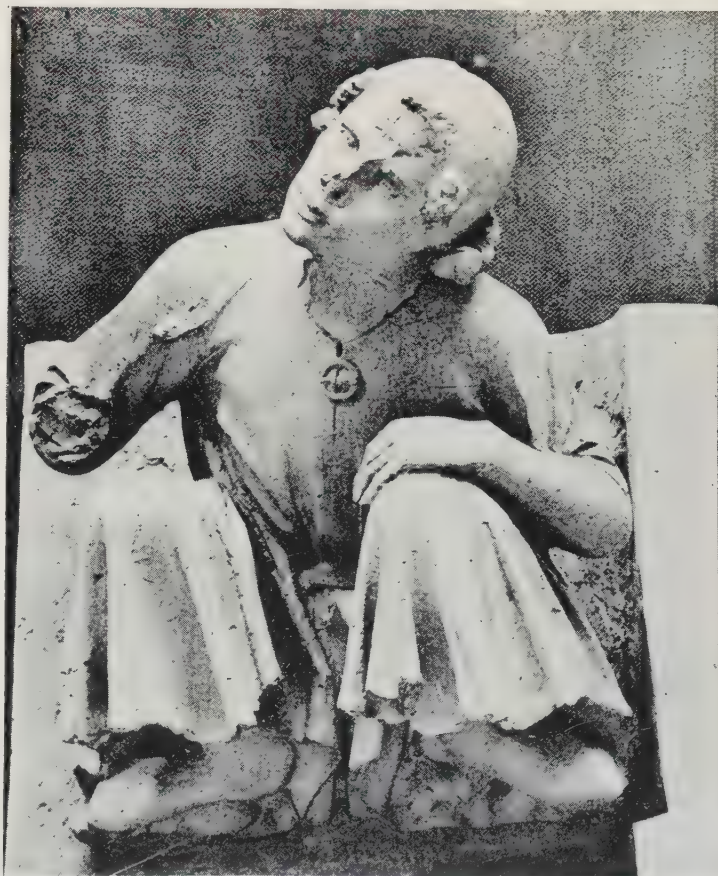


FIG. 6. — Reims. — Figure in Upper Portions of North Transept.  
From: ROUSSEL, *La Sculpture Gothique*, 1.

style eastward to the Rhineland and the great Saxon centers.

As to the intermediary steps between the figures at Noyon and Mainz, I should hesitate to go so far as to assume the personal presence of the "Naumburg Master" at Noyon. For one thing there is still to be recognized certain differences of style: at Mainz and Naumburg bulkier, drier, coarser, more pathetic in expression. Also, if I am correct in considering the date of the Reims "*Bald Man*" (Fig. 2) as 1240-1250, and if the Noyon figure is a derivation, there arises a rather serious chronological problem — the Mainz sculpture being usually dated in the *previous* decade in conjunction with consecration dates of the two choirs. Those dates, however, need not apply to the sculpture, which decorated screens and could have been inserted later. If a date of 1250 or thereabouts for the Mainz ensembles is assumed, the theory of direct influence is strengthened. This, however, impinges on the usually accepted dating of the "Naumburg Master's" activity at Naumburg itself.

Nor does the presence of the "Naumburg Master" at Noyon explain the genesis of the Noyon figures. As can be shown, the related figures at Noyon and Reims grow out of steady research over a considerable space of time, in a restricted area, and in a manner which does not require the assumption of participation by a master originating in another artistic climate. The very motive, or category of form, assumed by the figures at Noyon and Reims contains implicitly, at a relatively early date, the plastic force and psychological pathos which appears in so pronounced a manner at Mainz and Naumburg. This new type of humanity and method of presenting humanity did not at first have much to do with the great iconographical figures of the portal sculpture, but its emergence marks a date of some importance in the larger aspects of Gothic style; and its vigorous reception across the Rhine underlines once again (regardless of matters of opinion as to the activity of individual masters) the supra-national unity and alertness of the Medieval Occident toward the middle of the XIII Century.

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It is possible to make too intense a study of the iconographic tympana and large portal figures at the expense of the so-called "decorative" sculpture, the smaller or less obviously placed figures, high up on portions of the architectural structure, or (like the "marmosets") lost in the shadow of the impressive saints, which they appear to support. In this relatively remote world of sculpture, there is a possibility for freedom which was in a sense denied the artists working on the hieratic ensembles of the great portals. Older or extraneous forms survive or are revived here, and new forms find their birth and mature, gradually acquiring the strength to break into the more "official" art of the portal sculptors or forcing their way into positions of greater prominence, altering, as they do so, earlier rules





FIG. 7. — St. Denis, West Front, North Portal. — Caryatids. Phot. Courtesy S. McK. Crosby.

of decoration and of style itself.<sup>8</sup>

To this world of sculptural forms in Gothic art belongs the caryatid type with which the figures at Noyon may be identified. The Gothic caryatid has its roots in the very beginnings of Gothic style. Synchronizing with the column-statue and the registered tympanum, it makes an appearance in a preliminary but extended form at St. Denis on Suger's west front.<sup>9</sup> Carved in low relief in rectangular frames and let into the lower portions of the jambs as surface decoration, the figures bear no specific load, although they are placed invariably at the lowest level of the figured decoration and in a vertical sense as a rule beneath columns. One of these inlay-figures, under a succession of reliefs on the socle of the north door, is drawn as if

actually bearing a burden, the remainder suggest their expressive role more remotely, sometimes with open hands (Fig. 7). Two of the reliefs, flanking the

8. For an early and very successful exploitation of this theory, see: VÖGE's important *Die Bahnbrecher des Naturstudiums um 1200*, in: "Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst," 1913-1914, pp. 193-216. This topic was also treated by HENRI FOCILLON. See: *Quelques Survivances de la Sculpture Romane dans l'Art Français*, in: *Medieval Studies in Memory of Arthur Kingsley Porter*, Harvard University Press, 1939 (reprinted in *Moyen Age, Survivances et Réveils*, 1943). In particular are mentioned the relations of the Gothic gargoyle and such socle reliefs as the *sciapod* at Sens to Romanesque art. The importance of remote placement is also suggested in his *Art d'Occident*, Paris, 1938, p. 220, where in speaking of experiments in treating the human figure in Gothic art, he mentions "*les parties hautes [of the church] qui même les favorisaient.*"

9. The style of the St. Denis caryatids is somewhat suggestive of metalwork although there may be influence from the sculpture of south-west France and Burgundy. PANOFKY notes affinities to figures in the choir windows (*Abbot Suger*, Princeton University Press, 1946, p. 195). The stylistic origins of these figures and their relation to the style of the remaining elements of the façade sculpture are now being studied by SUMNER MCK. CROSBY, who, after bringing out his first volume on the *Abbey of St. Denis* (Yale University Press, 1942) is preparing another volume on Suger's church.



central portal, nude except for drapery over the shoulder and around the waist, appear to have an antique prototype; interesting as they are, they stand curiously outside the early Gothic trend of development.<sup>10</sup> More important for the future of the form is a far cruder little bearing figure on a capital in the crypt (Caveau Royal); although nude, his association with the architectural design of the capital

follows a different rule, similar to a clothed figure in the Narthex (see also the caryatid under the *Ane qui vielle* at Chartres).

Experiments outside the immediate Parisian region carry on this latter tendency. The human figure, with no visible trace of antique prototype, becomes represented as an active participant in the structural logic of the architecture, and from this association acquires a new plasticity and formal significance. For example, in the obscure little parish church at Bury (Oise), in the north aisle, an elementary caryatid form is carved above a capital at the very springing of a cross-rib; the architectural form is decisive for the representational element of the sculpture, the arms of the little man continuing the profiles of the lateral tori and the head and body falling clearly into the limits of the central torus of the rib: an interesting example of Henri Focillon's theory of metamorphosis, and not too far removed from the principles of Romanesque style elucidated by him and Baltrusaitis, although the analogy cannot be carried too far as a comparison with a Romanesque example, such as the caryatids at Beaulieu (Fig. 12) will instantly make clear.<sup>11</sup> At Cambronne (Oise) in the transept,



FIG. 8. — Champeaux, Transept. — Caryatid. — Phot. Library of Congress.

11. The early Gothic figure is not merely provincial and tentative in technique; it is already on the road toward independence of the systematic subservience to architectural ornament or mouldings as defined by BALTRUSAITIS in his fundamental *Stylistique Ornementale de la Sculpture Romane* and by HENRI FOCILLON in: *l'Art des Sculpteurs Romains*, *Art d'Occident* and *Vie des Formes*, *passim*. The extraordinarily beautiful figures at Beaulieu are inextricably part of the trumeau out of which they are carved. In this connection, the caryatid form does not ap-

10. This point needs emphasis. It is not until Strasbourg, over a century later than the St. Denis figures, that the nude classical form reappears as a Gothic sculpted caryatid. (H. JANTZEN, *Deutsche Bildhauer des Dreizehnten Jahrhunderts*, 1925, pp. 44-45, figs. 16 and 17).

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there were originally two caryatid-figures at the springing of the ribs; the remaining example is far less systematically related to the architecture than at Bury, bearing his apparent load on his back, the hands resting on the knees.<sup>12</sup> The deviation is important for the future development of the form which gradually moves into other positions in the interior architecture: for example as consoles under columns, as at St. Martin in Champeaux (Seine et Marne) (Fig. 8), where, toward 1175-1180, the style of the figure is only remotely influenced by the form of the column with which it is associated. Sheltered under its edicule, the figure



FIG. 9. — Champeaux, Transept. — Caryatid. (Detail.) Phot. Library of Congress.

at Champeaux suggests an experimental form of the later, XIII Century "marmosets" (see Fig. 2). In this connection, it is to be noted that the "marmoset-caryatid" under the statues of portals plays a relatively insignificant role in the formative stages of the motive, where architectural, rather than figurative, elements are points of attraction.<sup>13</sup> There is a kind of

pear to have been so popular in Romanesque sculpture as in Gothic, and the great majority of the true caryatids in Romanesque France tend to be late. Some examples: St. Lazare, Autun (trumeau); St. Genou and La Berthenoux (Indre) on capitals and associated with monsters (reproduced, P. DESCHAMPS, *Romanesque Sculpture in France*, (PANTHEON edition), 1930, pls. 60 and 61); Jarnac-Champagne (mentioned by E. L. MENDELL, *Romanesque Sculpture in Saintonge*, her thesis published under HENRI FOUILLOL's direction, Yale University Press, 1941, p. 140). More frequent examples occur in Provence, at St. Gilles (west front trumeau and corbel), Arles (Cloister), Tarascon (corbels) and appear to be related to earlier examples in Apulia and Lombardy (see: A. K. PORTER, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*, Boston, 1923,

I, pp. 58-70; E. LEFÈVRE-PONTALIS, in: "Bulletin Monumental," 1923, pp. 184-188). The Anglo-Norman School which was intimately related in more than one respect to the early development of Gothic architecture (see the recent studies of J. BONY, for example, in: "Bulletin Monumental," 1937, pp. 187-88) does not seem to have had much influence on the development of the caryatid type of the Ile-de-France. Interesting, however, is the appearance of caryatids forming vault-corbels in the Chapter House at Durham. For figures derived from the antique Atlas type in Pre-Romanesque miniatures see: E. PANOFSKY, *Studies in Iconology*, 1939, p. 20, n. 10.

12. Photographs of the Bury and Camborne figures are reproduced by M. AUBERT, in: *Les Plus Anciennes Croisées d'Ogives*, excerpt from: "Bulletin Monumental," 1934, pp. 82, and 95.

13. The caryatid is absent under the XII Century column statues of Chartres (the single female figure on which one statue on the north door of the *Portail Royal* stands is not a true caryatid), Bourges, Le Mans and Etampes, although a head and hand are suggested under one statue in Montfaucon's drawings of Suger's portal at St. Denis. Between 1160 and 1170 human figures, monsters and animals appear directly under the feet of the

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FIG. 10. — Laon, West Porch. — Caryatid and Mask (from an early cast before restoration). — Phot. Library of Congress.

logic in this, for the column statue is by formal definition an integral part of the column and does not require support, *as a statue*. A true caryatid actually supporting the base of a statue does not appear with anything like systematic frequency until the north portal of Chartres, in large part doubtless under general influence from Laon.

One more example of associating the human figure with Gothic structural elements deserves attention. At Etampes, in the critical formative period toward 1160-1170, the ribs at one key-stone were decorated along their length with angels whose design is determined by the molding and where the pose of the hands is similar to that of the figure at Cambronne.<sup>14</sup> The angels are not true caryatid motives, but the experiment seems to lie behind a remarkable variant of the caryatid theme in which a single male figure is carved at the intersection of the cross-ribs with arms and legs extended along their diagonals, as if the figure were carrying the entire vault on its back. A manuscript miniature, dateable about 1200 may well reflect the architectural application of this motive in the Remois at a relatively late date.<sup>15</sup> Like the standing caryatid, it travelled eastward and re-

saints, prophets or precursors, generally as if being trampled rather than as a figurative support—examples of a human figure resembling a caryatid occur very sporadically and on none too sure evidence at St. Germain des Près in Paris (according to an engraving after Montfaucon), St. Denis, north portal (much restored and subject to extreme caution), Senlis (damaged and restored).

14. VIOLLET-LE-DUC, *Dictionnaire*, art. *Clef*, III, p. 261, fig. 3.

15. Reims, Bibliothèque, MS 672, fol. 1. Most recently published in Catalogue, *Chefs d'Oeuvre de l'Art Français*, (Paris), 1937, No. 751, pp. 343-344, pl. 102. I am indebted to HANNS SWARZENSKI for the idea that the principal figure is most probably architectural in origin and may be used as evidence of the early application of the form in Champagne, if not the cathedral perhaps in one of the churches of Reims.





FIG. 11. — Laon, West Porch. — Caryatid and Mask (from an early cast before restoration). — Phot. Library of Congress.

ceived an extensive treatment on the Rhine at Mainz, and beyond.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, well before 1200, there emerges in a fruitful association with architectural members in the interior of the church a motive with two components: (1) the figure of a man, in the contemporary costume of the period, who (2) bears an architectural element for burden. The design of bearer, although still bound by rules imposed by his emplacement in the structure and by the very fact that he is carved from a building block is nevertheless free to develop along lines of naturalistic representation and expression not merely as concerns pose, proportions and action of the body but also in the handling of the head and facial mask.

This principle of formal liberation from the architecture, leaving the representational element, expressive factors and symbolic relation to the architecture to develop somewhat independently, is a basic feature of the Gothic caryatid. It finds its first, and perhaps decisive, expansion at Laon about 1200-1215, where the portal sculpture of tympana and flanking statues inaugurated the XIII Century style as we have come to know it.<sup>17</sup> The Cathedral at Laon is rich in caryatids — no longer associated with the interior, but placed high up at the roof line of the nave and choir and more dramatically and significantly just above eye level on the porch of the façade (Figs. 10 and 11). Here the figures are carved on the great blocks of stone from which spring the archivolts of the porch opening to the west, and are powerfully associated with the "art of masks" which flourished at nearby centers of the Ile-de-France and under French influence in connection with

16. O. SCHMITT, in: *Festschrift Heinrich Schrohe*, Mainz, 1934, pp. 70-78.

17. See: E. LAMBERT's excellent article, *Les Portails Sculptés de la Cathédrale de Laon*, in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," 1937, p. 97. LAMBERT considers the façade sculpture as finished before 1205, differing from L. BROCHE who mentions a date "vers 1215" (*La Cathédrale de Laon*, 1926, p. 11).

vaulting members.<sup>18</sup> At Laon and also at Paris (west front) soon after, the caryatid appears on the corbels supporting the lintels of the portals. Already at Laon, however, the classic Gothic program for the placement of the caryatid is well defined. The form is rigorously excluded from the wall or interstitial filling between bearing elements. Its place is on buttresses in the upper regions of the church supporting a heavy overhanging cornice on corbels supporting lintels, on supports for arches, as on the west porch, finally under portal statues. A representation of an active bearing principle it is as a rule placed on similarly functional or active portions of the architecture. This program, so clearly evident at Laon, appears at Reims in the work of one of the earlier ateliers (Fig. 4), and is repeated and developed.

The tremendous development at Reims is well enough known, even though



FIG. 12. — Beaulieu, Trumeau of Portal. — Caryatids. From: A. KINGSLEY PORTER, *Romanesque Sculpture of the Pilgrimage Roads*.

a complete corpus of caryatid figures there has not been made and would repay the effort. As suggested earlier, it is almost certainly from Reims that the Noyon figures derive, rather than directly from Laon.<sup>19</sup> It is at Reims that the caryatid appears to find its greatest freedom as representation of the human form, even though paradoxically it remains rigorously associated with the masonry load it is represented as bearing. This freedom emphatically does not imply a complete, formal emancipation from the architecture. The caryatid is actually as well as figuratively a bearing member in-so-far as it is carved from a block of masonry which has an active role to play in the structural economy. That masonry block can be felt in the design of the sculpture, in which the

18. See my article cited earlier, in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," 1937. The "art of masks" is a parallel case of "humanizing" structural elements, and it is possible that the head alone may symbolize the entire caryatid figure in some cases.

19. It is interesting, however, that one of the Laon figures illustrated here prefigures in pose the unusual horizontal caryatid at Noyon. In both cases the shape of the block appears to have influenced the design of the figure (see below, for additional characteristics of the same nature).



human figure seems to touch at cardinal points the invisible limits of the surface of the cube from which it is carved (Fig. 13). This is also true at Noyon where the small figures, even though built on naturalistic proportions, do not give the impression of being applied to the stone-bearing member. They appear to seek with their arms, heads and legs the limits of the mason's block, repeating in their gestures the angular form of the fundamental point of departure, and in this way approaching in more than one instance the geometrical armature studied with such care by Villard de Honnecourt in his "Sketch Book."

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In view of the foregoing, it seems possible to isolate an authentic Gothic form of the cary-



FIG. 13. — Reims, West Front. — Caryatid on Buttress near the North Lateral Portal.  
From: MOREAU-NÉLATON, *La Cathédrale de Reims*.

atid. Its development appears to have taken place on the *chantiers* of the Ile-de-France and the Laonnois which developed Gothic architecture itself; a product of what may be termed the First Gothic of the XII Century, it was passed on to the High Gothic, particularly at Reims for its full flowering. This strict architectural relationship explains to some degree the absence of antique reminiscences in its most characteristic and critical phases, and its organic relation to intense architectural experiment in the north may provide a reason for its divergence from existing but more scattered Romanesque manifestations of the motive. Indeed, far from defining an influence, there is hardly a



more economical way of differentiating the salient characteristics of Romanesque and Gothic figure styles than to compare the "trumeau-man" of Beaulieu (Fig. 12) with the burden-bearer of Reims (Fig. 13). This is a striking instance of what might be termed a Gothic "humanizing" of architectural elements as opposed to the "architecturizing" of the human figure in Romanesque style.

I should like here to add a further word with regard to classical tradition in this problem of the Gothic caryatid. The Reims figure just mentioned appears, without much doubt, to have assimilated several formal motives from the Antique: bare legs and feet, hand on haunch, system of proportions. But it also gives the impression that an original stream of formal development was meeting on equal terms an older tradition to which it has achieved plastic affinity. This shading of interpretation is important; in other words the Gothic sculptural development of the type is apparently not so much *from* classical inspiration as *toward* a point where such earlier forms become useable. Differing in quality and degree from the classicism of the better known *Visitation* portal-figures, the style of the caryatid in question may seem more genuinely Proto-Renaissance. It is possible, perhaps even probable, that a similar receptivity to forms of rediscovered classical art may have colored the design of the Reims "marmoset" figures, and that in pose of legs and treatment of such details as drapery and the hands and arms, they betray an interest in Gallo-Roman remains (Figs. 5 and 14).<sup>20</sup> This capability of style may reflect a deep community of artistic need underlying the influence of the Reims "caryatid style" on the German centers previously mentioned and on the immediate circle of Nicolo Pisano at the heart of a recognized Proto-Renaissance movement (Fig. 15). Another extension of that style, turning toward the dramatic, as it appears on the lintel of the south portal of the Reims west front, certainly should be brought into relation with the Naumburg screen cycle and some of the fragments at Mainz (Figs. 16 and 17).<sup>21</sup> Does not this data of style also underlie the modern haunting search for definition of an artistic personality on the model of Renaissance Humanist art-history, like the "Naumburg Master" himself?

It might be well at this point to evoke the notion of the Humanism of the XIII Century which Henri Focillon taught with conviction and eloquence. In the case of the Gothic caryatid, it is impossible to divorce the "humanizing" of architectural elements from the semi-anonymous conditions of work on the cathedral *chantiers*. It is equally clear that the formal connection with architecture produced

20. See: ESPERANDIEU, *Recueil*, V. no. 3653. This rustic type of Antique remainder differs from the style of the sarcophagus, probably imported to Reims, to which PANOFKY draws attention as a source for a figure on one of the capitals of the Cathedral choir (E. PANOFKY, *Op. cit.*, 1927, ill.)

21. See: VITRY, *Op. cit.*, 1919, I, pl. LXIII. VITRY notes a more "hasty" treatment than in the lintel figures on the north portal (p. 33). The expressive action, physical types and design in two planes for the figures seem to me worth further study and comparison with the Naumburg style. While it is possible here to sense the differences between the French and Naumburg styles which I suggested above in connection with the Noyon "bald" caryatid, it is hard to deny a common source of which the small caryatids seem a major manifestation.



FIG. 14. — Reims. — Central Figure, Gallo-Roman Altar. — From: ESPERANDIEU, *Recueil*, V.

something more than the “decorative” or “grotesque,” but something less than portraiture. The motive, however, may well have been a significant experimental ground for new expressions of human action, characterization and emotion. It was not a blanket expression of pessimism. The effect produced by the very moving figure part way up the Reims façade hardly bears out Dante’s well-known passage on the type, enslaved and crushed under its burden, provoking pity in the beholder. To modern eyes there can be found a deeper expression akin to patience and nobility — a vivid definition of Man as both free and restrained, as both substance and support within a structural logic which implies more than architecture.

\* \* \*

Seen against the background of the developments in Western sculpture sketched in above, the four existing figures at Noyon as-

sume more importance than their scale or subject-matter might at first glance indicate. They lead directly into a number of incompletely solved problems which are of primary significance. As a step toward future study and as a means to bring together the necessarily variegated strands of a complex analysis, the following preliminary conclusions seem worth a brief summary.

FIRST: As indices of the quality of the west portal sculpture, the extant figures reveal the existence of a very able High Gothic atelier at Noyon. Any history of Gothic sculpture which pretends to completeness cannot omit some consideration of its activity. The supposed reconstruction and recarving of the Noyon west portals after the fire of 1293 appears largely, if not entirely, apocryphal. Nor does a dating of the portals according to assumption of the



FIG. 15. — Pisa, Baptistery. — Caryatid. — From: G. SWARZENSKI, *Niccolo Pisano*.





FIG. 16. — Reims, Lintel South, Portal, West Front. — Group from the Story of St. Paul. From: VITRY, *La Cathédrale de Reims*, I.

(Figs. 18 and 19) and would date them accordingly.

SECONDLY: In style, motive, and logic of placement the bearing figures in question are part of a development which in the XIII Century received decisive impetus at Laon and found its full expansion at Reims. The style of the Noyon figures is intimately connected with that of similar figures at Reims and evidence to the contrary being unavailable must be considered as deriving from Reims. Influence from Amiens, however, is to be felt in the Noyon portals, directly expressed in the decorative parti of quatrefoil frames and quadrilobed dia-

“normal course of construction,” i.e. 1215-1220, as made in a recent theory, seem any more tenable. The character of existing floral ornament, decorative details and structure points toward a date of 1240-1250; it seems probable that the carved elements of the portals, treated on a grand and imposing scale were finished, assembled and inserted only after the porch and a large portion of the west towers were completed. This was about the time of the campaign of construction which included the adjacent chapter house and cloister, when, it should be noted, the western portions of the cathedral must be assumed as still a *chantier*; entrance to the church at this time, as for a number of decades before, was practicable through the transept portals. I interpret the four extant bearing figures on the corbels of the lateral portals as part of the original decorative and structural scheme of the portals as a whole



FIG. 17. — Naumburg, Screen. — Payment of Judas. From: KÜAS, *Die Naumburger Werkstatt*.



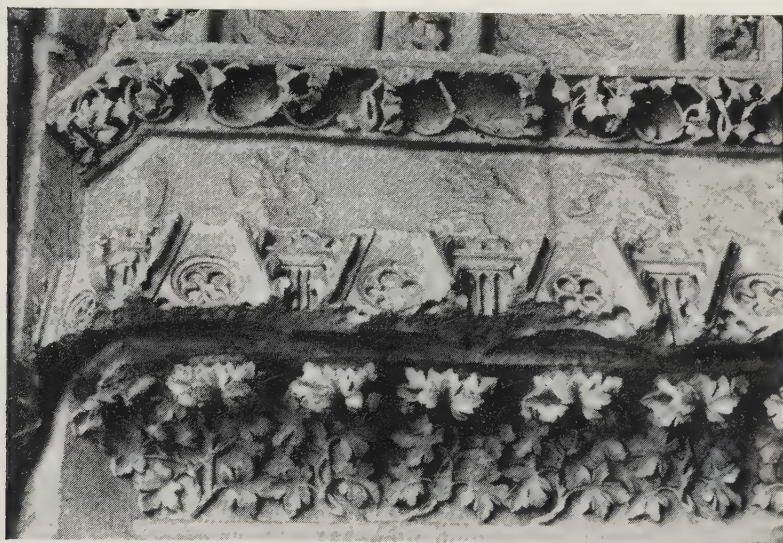


FIG. 18. — Noyon, North Portal, West Front. — Detail of Foliated Ornament (see: Fig. 19). *Phot. Archives Photographiques.*

per-work. Although the dating of the Reims west portal sculpture (and to some extent that of Amiens) is still vague, a dating of 1240-1250 for the Noyon portals is not in conflict with current chronological theories respecting comparative material in the two larger centers.

THIRDLY: Except for the above indications the authorship of the Noyon figures is uncertain.

Against the previously advanced theory of the personal presence of the "Naumburg Master" at Noyon, is the date of 1240-1250 which forces serious revision of previous theories of the dates of the "Master's" activity in the Rhineland and perhaps even Saxony if maintained. Proof of a portrait and a distinctive personal style in the one figure at Noyon recently ascribed to the "Naumburg Master" is unavailable; there is on the other hand evidence to the contrary.

FOURTHLY: Influence of the style and motive (of which the figures at Noyon are characteristic examples) on the Rhineland, Saxony and Italy is nevertheless undeniable. Implicit in the early handling of the motive of the Gothic caryatid are capabilities of vivid human characterization and action which, transposed into group compositions, lies behind the dramatic narrative style of some scenes at Reims, and especially the screen-cycle at Naumburg. The classical antique tradition, which seems dormant during the experimental period after 1150 when the Gothic caryatid was developed plastically in close association with structural elements of early Gothic architecture, returns in the second quarter of the XIII Century; one formative strain appears to have been Gallo-Roman indigenous sculpture, another the more sophisticated tradition producing the partially draped idealized nude. The synthesis of these developments lends weight to the concept of a Proto-Renaissance in several of the developed Gothic ateliers, with new inflexions. It also helps to explain the rapid spread of what may be termed a Humanist style toward such areas as the Rhineland and Italy, where an influence was in a sense prepared by a receptive basis of traditions and aims. It is reasonable, doubtless necessary, to assume temporary migrations of artists in both directions, to explain the rapidity and thoroughness of this dissemination; but the movement is so

broad and the accomplishment so large the postulates of individual and "national" responsibility appear inadequate. In this sense the piling up of additions to the oeuvre of the "Naumburg Master," especially in France (as at Noyon), tend to defeat their aim. They merely increase a myth-like aura about a development which deserves a place in history.

1945 — 1947.

CHARLES SEYMOUR, JR.



FIG. 19. — Noyon. — North Portal, West Front, during restoration, 1937. *Phot. Gindrat.*



# LE RELIEF DU *JUGEMENT DE SALOMON* À LA FACADE DE LA CATHÉDRALE D'AUXERRE

**B** IEN des problèmes complexes de l'histoire de l'art médiéval sont évoqués dans le dernier ouvrage de synthèse, *Art d'Occident*, de Henri Focillon. Souvent quelques mots ouvrent de grandes perspectives de sousentendus, ce qui constitue la force toute particulière de la pensée du maître. Ainsi le plan iconographique de St. Etienne d'Auxerre est caractérisé, suivant lui, (p. 225) par "une unité raffinée." Ce "raffinement" se manifeste dans l'effort obstiné de chaque nouvelle campagne des travaux en vue de la réalisation d'un programme d'ensemble et dans la subtilité des rapports iconographiques entre la décoration des portails.

L'analyse du panneau latéral du portail de droite de la façade permet de confirmer les vues de Focillon.<sup>1</sup> On entend par panneau latéral sud la décoration comprise entre le portail sud même et le contrefort de la tour méridionale. Elle se compose des médaillons représentant *l'Enfance de David*, les vestiges de la niche ayant abrité *Notre Dame des Vertus*, et le bas relief du *Jugement de Salomon*. Comme les médaillons de *l'Enfance de David* font partie, à mon avis, d'une restauration exécutée au XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle et se rattachent à ceux du portail central figurant la parabole de *l'Enfant Prodigue*, il faut ici les laisser de côté. Au dessus de ces oeuvres, la décoration du triplet, ayant abrité la statue aujourd'hui disparue de *Notre Dame des*

1. Ce travail se rattache étroitement à une série d'études sur la sculpture des portails de la Cathédrale d'Auxerre, parues dans les "Cahiers Français" (Montevideo), Mai 1942, pp. 5-12; Juin 1942, pp. 3-4; Mars 1943, pp. 4-10; Avril 1943; pp. 7-10.

*Vertus*,<sup>2</sup> ressemble aux architectures d'églises des baldaquins surmontant les niches vides du portail de droite. Un cordon de feuillage sépare le triplet de la niche du *Jugement de Salomon* (Fig. 2). Un arc tréflé, soutenu par de fines colonnettes et surmonté d'un fronton aigu couronné d'un fleuron, est orné d'une rose hexagonale et de crochets.

Le relief du *Jugement de Salomon* n'a pas manqué de susciter l'intérêt des archéologues comme Enlart, Charles Porée et le chanoine Fourrey. Mais, comme cette sculpture est mal visible de par son emplacement élevé, des descriptions inexactes ou des interprétations erronées se sont accumulées, faciles à éviter lorsqu'on inspecte de près l'oeuvre en question.

Il saute aux yeux — et Enlart et Porée l'ont bien vu — que les dimensions du relief, et celles du socle l'élevant, prouvent qu'il ne fut pas destiné dès le début à prendre place dans cette niche qu'il remplit mal.<sup>3</sup> On peut préciser cette

2. L'histoire de cette statue ne peut être mieux résumée que par les paroles de l'abbé Lebeuf qui avait encore sous les yeux des documents disparus aujourd'hui. Il écrit dans la *Prise d'Auxerre*, p. 57: "Celle [la Chapelle] de Notre Dame des Vertus est l'une des plus considérables et où la dévotion paraît le plus entretenue quoique son bâtiment ne soit pas ancien. Ce n'était d'abord qu'un autel qu'on avit dressé au côté droit du grand portail de la Cathédrale lorsqu'on le bâtissoit, c'est à dire au XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècle: mais une Image miraculeuse de la Sainte Vierge y avait attiré une dévotion extraordinaire. Le Roy Jean passant par Auxerre l'an 1361 descendit de cheval avec le nouvel évêque Jean Germain, et fit avec lui sa prière devant cette Image avant que d'entrer dans l'église. Le nombre et la réputation des grâces que Dieu accordait en ce lieu par l'intercession de Sa Sainte Mère s'étendit si loin qu'un Bourgeois de Sens nommé Jean Chasserat y fonda il y a plus de trois cens ans une messe qu'on célèbre encore aujourd'hui à la pointe du jour pendant toute l'année. C'est ce qui fit qu'on pratiqua un couvert sur cet Autel à l'endroit où est représentée en relief l'histoire du Jugement de Salomon: et la dévotion allant toujours en augmentant, on entreprit en 1558 de bâtir à côté de la tour une belle chapelle dans laquelle on transporta en 1565 l'ancien autel. Ce nouvel édifice avoit été comme séparé du corps de la Cathédrale; mais il fut réuni plus visiblement l'an 1637 par l'ouverture qui fut faite dans l'épaisseur de la tour pour aller d'un bâtiment à l'autre sans être exposé aux injures de l'air." On pourrait compléter par quelques documents des Archives Départementales de l'Yonne, voir *Conclusions Capitulaires*, G. 1798 bis, 1806 et 1807. Voir aussi: LEBEUF, *Mémoires Concernant l'Histoire Ecclésiastique et Civile d'Auxerre*, Paris, 1743, p. 515 (vol. 1) et p. 215 (vol. 2); PORÉE (*La Cath. d'Auxerre*, dans la série *Petites Monographies des Grands Edifices de la France*, Paris, 1926) se contredit en admettant, p. 106, l'emplacement de l'autel attesté par LEBEUF, tandis que, p. 53, il refuse d'accepter cet emplacement, "dont les textes anciens établissent cependant l'existence non loin du portail," car, continue PORÉE, "protégés par lui [l'autel], les bas-reliefs qu'on voit [*Enfance de David*] . . . n'auraient pas souffert des intempéries comme elles ont fait." Cette contradiction s'explique probablement par l'interprétation à la lettre du texte des conclusions capitulaires (*Arch. de l'Yonne*, G. 1798 bis) qui contient la permission d'enterrer en 1420, dans la chapelle Notre Dame des Vertus le père décédé d'un chanoine. Comme l'office de l'autel fut très important, un chanoine en fut chargé ce qui fit appeler l'endroit "chapelle" sans qu'il soit indiqué d'en conclure à l'existence d'une chapelle proprement dite. En outre, il n'y a pas lieu de mettre en doute les textes assez précis fixant l'emplacement à droite du portail; puis, les médaillons de *l'Enfance de David* son tardifs et se sont effrités à cause de l'emploi d'une pierre différente, gélive. Autrement on ne pourrait comprendre pourquoi des statues, comme celles du portail central représentant l'histoire de Joseph, se seraient conservées intactes, bien qu'ayant été exposées aux intempéries.

3. ENLART (*Congrès Archéologique*, 1907, p. 605) s'engouffre, en partant de ce fait, dans une suite d'hypothèses et d'erreurs qu'il faut bien relever. Il parle d'abord d'une modification du panneau encadrant "dans la première moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècle auquel on a donné alors un pendant à l'autre extrémité de la façade." On n'en sait rien. En comparant les deux panneaux, on constate de grandes ressemblances des proportions et de la décoration ainsi qu'un appareil identique, ce qui invite à ne pas penser à des modifications, mais à la conception simultanée de tous les éléments de cette décoration dès le début du XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècle. Après avoir fait croire qu'il ignorait l'existence de *N. D. des Vertus* ("une triple arcature entourait un sujet disparu") ENLART parle plus tard de "l'autel Notre Dame la Dehors" (confondant *N. D. des Vertus* avec l'église Notre Dame la Dehors) qui "s'abritait sous un triple auvent," où "la statue de Notre Dame accostée de deux anges céroféraires devait occuper la triple arcature qui règne sous le *Jugement de Salomon*." Il est possible que la Vierge fût accompagnée de deux statuette d'anges, mais rien n'autorise



observation par l'étude de la plaque de base divisée en trois morceaux. Ce fait ne mériterait pas un intérêt particulier — car évidemment il fallait hisser un groupe de dimensions si considérables en morceaux détachés — si les divergences morphologiques entre les trois sections du relief ne correspondaient pas très exactement aux divisions du socle. En outre, le fond du relief accuse des mutilations qui semblent provenir de l'obligation de faire tenir le groupe dans une niche peu profonde. Je crois, en effet, que cette mutilation s'est produite au moment du transfert de la statue de *Notre Dame des Vertus* dans la chapelle construite pour elle. Avant cette date (1565), le relief aurait pu profiter de l'auvent abritant la statue en dépassant la niche, et s'appuyer de cette façon sur l'auvent. Le *Jugement de Salomon* aurait pu être avancé ainsi jusqu'à la hauteur du contrefort de la tour méridionale. Or, lorsqu'on fut obligé de supprimer l'auvent en raison du transfert de la statue de la *Vierge*, on se vit contraint d'enlever l'appui du bas-relief et on se décida sans doute alors à faire tenir celui-ci tant bien que mal dans la niche proprement dite.

Une description détaillée aidera mieux à comprendre ces hypothèses et à souligner certains détails mal visibles et mal vus par les interprètes. Le roi Salomon est assis sur un trône consistant simplement d'un bloc de pierre carré sans ornementation. Il a les jambes croisées d'une façon nonchalante, la jambe gauche posée sur la cuisse droite, variation de l'attitude consacrée du juge. Un large manteau dégage amplement la robe serrée par une ceinture, bon indice pour la fin du XIII<sup>e</sup> et le début du XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècle. Malgré l'effritement de la pierre et des mutilations plus graves portant sur l'avant-bras gauche et presque sur tout le bras droit, ainsi que sur la tête et le cou, on reconnaît que le roi se tourne vers le bourreau, planté devant lui, et soulève ses bras jusqu'à la hauteur de ses épaules en direction de l'enfant tenu par le bourreau. A côté du pied gauche du roi est assis un lion, également très endommagé.<sup>4</sup> . . . Derrière le trône se dissimule un personnage également mutilé, auquel manque la tête. Le bourreau — un géant aux traits négroïdes — est vêtu d'un costume militaire romain.<sup>5</sup> . . . Il regarde attentivement le roi. Au dessus de sa cotte de maille, un ceinturon assez mince est tiré vers le bas, du côté gauche, par le long fourreau de son épée qu'il s'apprête à tirer pour exécuter l'ordre du roi.

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de donner à cette hypothèse l'air d'une vérité documentaire. Bien plus encore, ENLART joint d'autres hypothèses. Le *Jugement de Salomon* aurait été "originellement plus bas." Pourquoi? Nos yeux et les documents suggèrent l'emplacement du groupe au dessus du triplet encore visible. Sur cette hypothèse se greffe immédiatement une autre. "C'est probablement au seuil du portail et sous le *Jugement de Salomon* que l'Official rendait la Justice." Soit, mais nous n'en savons rien sauf que le bon sens n'admet pas cette idée. C'est très différent de la Cathédrale de Léon (où le groupe se trouve dans le porche à l'endroit désigné *locus appellationis*) et de la Cathédrale de Rouen où il dominait l'Officialité, près du Portail des Libraires. Mais est-il probable que le "*locus appellationis*" fût situé près d'un autel surmonté d'une statue de la Vierge où une foule de pèlerins et de fidèles se receuillaient journellement pour adorer *Notre Dame des Vertus*? Cf. aussi: ENLART, *Rouen (Les Villes d'Art Célèbres)*, Paris, 1906, p. 40.

4. M. Porée (*Op. cit.*, p. 52), a signalé ce détail.

5. Cf. I *Rois* 10, 20. Après la description du trône de Salomon, on lit: ". . . deux lions étaient près des bras, . . .," FLAVIUS JOSÈPHE, *Op. cit.*, p. LXXXVIII.



FIG. 1. — Le Jugement de Salomon. — Cathédrale d'Auxerre. (Détail).

Ainsi le geste de Salomon s'explique. Il fait signe au bourreau de s'arrêter et l'empêche de tirer l'épée en vue du coup fatal. Alors le nègre regarde son maître d'un air bien étonné sans apercevoir les deux personnages barbus qui apparaissent derrière son épaule gauche. Tandis que de l'homme placé entre le roi et le bourreau il ne reste plus que la barbe, le deuxième personnage, tête-nue et barbu également, pose son bras sur l'épaule gauche du nègre comme pour l'arrêter. Ce geste pourrait être interprété comme précédant l'ordre du roi ou, plus vraisemblablement, par un acte émotif : l'horrible sentence pourrait s'accomplir malgré l'intercession de Salomon, et l'homme désire éviter la catastrophe due au bourreau qui aime les faits accomplis. L'homme barbu jette un regard

foudroyant sur le groupe de personnages debout, à sa gauche ; il semble fixer en particulier la femme qui a menti.

Après avoir vu ce groupe actif, on aboutit, après une légère césure dans le mouvement, correspondant à une nouvelle section de la plaque de base, au groupe passif, au sens littéral du mot. La mère réelle est agenouillée, de profil, levant sa tête suppliante vers le roi-juge. Malgré les mains détruites, on les devine en prière. Derrière cette femme, la fausse mère, se tient debout. Tandis que son adversaire agenouillée porte les cheveux voilés, elle montre une chevelure abondante débordant.





FIG. 2. Le Jugement de Salomon. Cathédrale d'Auxerre.

dant d'un voile assez étroit. Elle recule légèrement le corps, ramène la main droite en arrière et froisse nerveusement son vêtement tout en regardant fixement le roi. Elle cache deux hommes dont les têtes en profil sont visibles au second plan et regardent chacune du côté opposé à l'autre, comme une sculpture de Janus.

Quelle est la signification de ce relief? Quelle en est la source iconographique? Au lieu de suivre le récit du Livre des Rois (I,3,16-24), l'imagier a préféré celui de Flavius Josèphe (comme plus tard Raphael et Poussin) dans les *Antiquités Judaïques* (livre VIII, chap. II, p. LXXX, dans la traduction latine des oeuvres, Paris, 1526, *Ruffino Aquileiensi Interprete*).<sup>6</sup> Confrontons les deux récits, à partir du moment "fertile" choisi par le tailleur d'image:

*Flavius Josèphe, éd. cit., p. LXXX*

*Jussit deferri et vivum et mortuum infantem, vocavitque quendam armigerum, praecipiens ut evaginato gladio ambo dividerentur infantes: ut utraque medietaem, et eius qui mortuus fuerat, et qui vivebat acciperet. In hoc autem judicio omnis quidam populus ignorans sententiam deridebat, quasi ab adolescente rege prolatam. Inter haec autem vera matre proclamante ne hoc fieret, sed potius ut infantulus sociae traderetur, sibi sufficere dicens, ut tantum viveret, eumque videret, licet alterius esse videretur: et e diverso altera praeparata esset ut divisum videret infantem, insuper veram matrem tormentis affici postulare: cognoscens rex utriusque voces de vero corde prolatas, reclamanti quidem ne perimeretur infantulus, iussit filium redonari, veram matrem eam esse cognoscens: alterius vero malitiam accusavit, quae necato proprio filio, etiam suae amicae natum videre cupiebat extinctum.*

### *I Rois 3,24-28*

Puis il [le roi] ajouta: Apportez moi une épée. On apporta une épée devant le roi. Et le roi dit. Coupez en deux l'enfant qui vit, et donnez-en la moitié à l'une et la moitié à l'autre. Alors la femme dont le fils était vivant sentit ses entrailles s'émouvoir pour son fils, et elle dit au roi: Ah! Monseigneur, donnez-lui l'enfant qui vit, et ne le faites point mourir. C'est elle qui est sa mère.

Il ressort de cette confrontation que les détails ajoutés par Josèphe — le bourreau tirant son épée, le peuple assistant au jugement — et les précisions psychologi-

6. Je tiens à remercier M. LE DR. P. TENTLER de m'avoir permis d'utiliser la précieuse édition latine des oeuvres de FLAVIUS JOSÈPHE en sa possession, l'édition de REINACH du texte original faisant défaut à Montevideo. — Il y aurait beaucoup à dire sur l'influence de JOSÈPHE sur l'iconographie médiévale. A Auxerre, toutes les scènes empruntées à l'Ancien Testament semblent s'inspirer de lui.



ques s'imposèrent facilement à l'imagier.

Cette apogée du drame est rendue avec un raffinement psychologique, avec un instinct sûr pour la combinaison des moments successifs. À l'instant du dénouement heureux, l'imagier unit l'attente des deux mères et l'arrêt de la sentence par le roi. Il y a là une forte tension dramatique, une sensibilité nouvelle pour l'enchaînement des faits dans un ordre de temps dicté par l'ensemble de la composition, aux plans nuancés en profondeur, aux effets de lumière utilisant les grands contrastes aussi bien que le jeu des profils ou des arêtes de plis pour s'y accrocher.

Cette fermeté intérieure n'est pas rompue par les divergences stylistiques correspondant aux sections de la plaque de base. Les proportions, le mouvement violent, presque tortillé, les plis tracés, avec véhémence, assez profondément, rapprochent la statue du roi assis du relief de l'ébrasement du portail droit (*David Jouant à la Cithare à Côté de Bethsabée*) et, par là, des groupes assis dans les niches du soubassement du portail central.<sup>7</sup> Ceci n'est pas étonnant car, comme le reste de la composition se rattache étroitement à l'oeuvre du maître de l'histoire de David et Bethsabée, on aurait là une nouvelle preuve que cet imagier faisait exécuter fréquemment des sculptures par un collaborateur de son atelier.



FIG. 3. — Le Jugement de Salomon. — Cathédrale d'Auxerre. (Détail).

7. Cf. mon travail cité, dans: "Cahiers Français," Mai 42, p. 11. J'y avais déterminé l'importance et l'unité des reliefs de l'histoire de David et Bethsabée et j'avais proposé de désigner l'imagier inconnu de ce groupe: Maître de l'Histoire de David et Bethsabée.

A côté du fils de David, de petite taille, aux gestes nerveux, se dresse le bourreau immense, la force brutale, l'athlète à déchaîner sur commandement, s'opposant de cette façon à la sagesse du roi. C'est un beau gaillard aux traits négroïdes (éthiopiens?), assez embarrassé de devoir tenir l'enfant emmaillotté qu'il semble écraser dans sa main de géant. Pourtant il le tient assez adroitement pour être en mesure de le diviser en deux. Il est très étonné, presque mécontent de devoir renoncer à l'exécution de l'ordre donné. Lorsque les gens du Moyen Age regardaient ce "surhomme," ils pensaient certainement à ces professionnels aussi connus que mésestimés: les "champions," au dire de Ch. V. Langlois,<sup>8</sup> "des athlètes qui faisaient métier de se battre pour autrui, à l'épée ou au bâton, en combat judiciaire." Le costume militaire s'adapte bien à ce personnage qui est à rapprocher de la figuration identique du *Jugement Dernier* du côté du Portail des Libraires (avant-corps du bâtiment)<sup>9</sup> de la Cathédrale de Rouen, du personnage posant une pierre sur la tête de St. Etienne dans le Jugement de ce Saint au premier registre du portail du même nom de Notre-Dame de Paris<sup>10</sup> et du Goliath d'un relief ornant une colonne du porche du transept nord de la Cathédrale de Chartres. En dehors des ressemblances de proportions et de costumes, on observe dans ces statues l'étude du mouvement en "*contraposto*," en distinguant bien jambe d'appui et jambe libre.

La tête du "champion," aux cheveux crépus, aux sourcils fortement saillants aux joues bourrelées, à la bouche lippue, marque peut-être des souvenirs littéraires ou une mémoire visuelle remarquable. Le commerce spirituel et matériel entre l'Orient et l'Occident persistait au XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècle. Il n'est pas impossible que l'imagier se soit basé sur son expérience personnelle.

La même recherche de vérité dans le portrait se manifeste dans le groupe de droite (Figs. 3 et 4). La vraie mère rappelle les statues de donatrices, si nombreuses aux portails des églises parisiennes du XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècle.<sup>11</sup> Le tailleur d'images dominé par ce que l'on pourrait appeler la mimique religieuse, adopte l'attitude de la prière pour exprimer la compassion de cette mère comme si elle voulait atteindre, à travers le fils de Bethsabée, Dieu lui-même. C'est le travail de ronde-bosse des ateliers royaux, les profils expressifs, la noblesse du trait, l'élégance sobre des vêtements, le modelé varié reflétant les moindres inflexions du corps, qui incarnent les aspects essentiels d'une technique et d'une conception nouvelles de l'art pré-sluterien.

L'image de cette mère, aspirant, les yeux écarquillés, à une décision équitable, contraste admirablement avec l'effigie de la femme menteuse, debout, le regard im-

8. CH. V. LANGLOIS, *La Vie en France au Moyen Age* . . . , vol. II, p. 318, note 3.

9. Voir: ENLART, *Rouen, Op. cit.*, Paris, 1906, p. 40.

10. AUBERT, *Notre Dame de Paris*, pl. 51.

11. Voir les trois *Donateurs* du Metropolitan Museum de New York, de la Collection Pierpont Morgan: le donateur accompagnant Notre Dame la Blanche de Langres (voir DR. RONOT, dans: "Bull. de la Soc. d'Histoire de l'Art Français," 1933, p. 193 ss), etc. et surtout le trésor encore inexploité des gravures dans: MILLIN, *Antiquités Nationales*, Paris, 1790. Comme on y voit des sculptures gravées qui existent encore, on peut se former par comparaison une image très juste de celles qui ne figurent que dans MILLIN. Voilà l'art des ateliers royaux à reconstituer.



passible. Mais ce sang-froid n'existe qu'en apparence. M. Porée a bien vu<sup>12</sup> qu'elle perd légèrement contenance. Elle semble vouloir reculer, s'en aller, tandis que sa main droite froisse nerveusement la robe, dans la région du cœur.<sup>13</sup> Tout ceci est exprimé avec un minimum d'émotion extérieure. L'action est tout intérieure; l'allusion par un geste mesuré, par un tracé de pli, acquiert cette force dramatique intense qui est bien dans la tradition française: Ici, sans doute, une tradition où l'apport direct de la statuaire classique a aidé à construire ces personnages, à faire de la lettre morte une action vivante aux émotions d'autant plus vibrantes qu'elles sont cachées. Ces apports trouvent facilement leur explication à un endroit plein de traditions gallo-

romaines. La tête de la fausse mère pourrait être rapprochée d'un bas-relief du Musée d'Auxerre trouvé dans le mur septentrional de l'ancienne cité gallo-romaine et représentant une *Bacchante Tenant une Cymbale*.<sup>14</sup> Mais en s'inspirant, par affinité d'esprit, de ces échos affaiblis de l'art gréco-romain, le maître auxerrois sut y



FIG. 4. — Le Jugement de Salomon. — Cathédrale d'Auxerre. (Détail).

12. PORÉE, *Op. cit.*, p. 52.

13. Le geste se retrouve cependant déjà avant au *Jugement de Salomon* d'une rose de la Cathédrale de Reims, voir: VITRY, *Cath. de Reims*, pl. 94.

14. Voir: *Catal. Raisonné du Musée d'Auxerre (Monuments lapidaires)*, par QUANTIN ET RIQUE, Auxerre, 1884, No. XXVII (fig.).

découvrir et en extraire ce qu'il y avait de purement grec. En prenant le même chemin, guidé peut-être par certaines oeuvres de Reims, des avertissements plus ou moins obscurs le firent hausser une allusion à la hauteur d'un développement dont il ne connaissait que les aboutissants le plus délayés.

Il reste à expliquer les figures du second plan, empruntées probablement à un mystère. Le personnage barbu derrière le bourreau, pourrait être un émissaire de Dieu, un prophète. En ce qui concerne les têtes énigmatiques du fond, très individualisées jusqu'aux détails de la physionomie, je serais tenté d'y voir les époux des deux femmes. Dans ce cas, il faudrait admirer l'accord psychologique, car l'homme correspondant à la femme menteuse soutiendrait alors le regard foudroyant du personnage arrêtant le bourreau, tandis que l'expression douloureuse de l'autre personnage serait celle du père véritable qui se détourne pour ne pas voir la réalisation de la sentence du roi.

Malgré les divergences relevées dans l'exécution, l'agencement général garantit l'harmonie de l'ensemble. La composition pivote autour de la figure centrale du bourreau. A gauche, la verticale domine, interrompue uniquement par le geste de Salomon et la jambe. A droite, après une césure dans l'espace, le jeu des vues alternantes se déploie en largeur et en profondeur, culminant dans le mouvement en arrière de la femme debout qui clôt la composition.

Après avoir compris la signification de ce relief, il faut le replacer dans l'ensemble de la statuaire de la Cathédrale d'Auxerre pour en découvrir le sens véritable, s'écartant de l'interprétation du texte du Livre des Rois.

Dans le grand *Credo* développé en pierre sur la façade de St. Etienne d'Auxerre, le *Jugement de Salomon* est en rapport étroit avec l'histoire de Bethsabée, sa mère, représentée au portail droit "Marie est le trône de Salomon."<sup>15</sup> On rejoint de nouveau Bethsabée, l'ancêtre de la Vierge, cette Vierge qui avait son image, au dessous du Jugement — Notre Dame des Vertus. Ces "vertus" ne sont — elles pas l'expression de la sagesse divine, laquelle a inspiré au fils de David son jugement et qui se montre également dans toute sa splendeur, dans les statuettes des *Sciences du Trivium et du Quadrivium*, surmontant, scandant la suite des reliefs de l'histoire de David et Bethsabée? En outre le tympan du portail central contient le *Jugement Dernier* représenté d'une manière bien différente de l'ordinaire et constituant, par ce fait, une relation spirituelle avec le *Jugement de Salomon*. Les scènes de la *Résurrection des Morts*, de *l'Enfer* et du *Pèsement des Ames* sont comprimées dans le linteau; la partie majeure du tympan est réservée à la grande figure

15. *De Laudibus Beatae Mariae*, lib. X, cap. II, cité par MÂLE, *L'Art Religieux . . . du XIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 236; et p. 158; Salomon symbolisant la sagesse éternelle assise sur les genoux de Marie. Dans de nombreuses statues de la Vierge, l'Enfant est représenté croisant ostensiblement les jambes. Ce détail s'explique probablement par l'attitude du Juge Salomon. MÂLE publie (*Op. cit.*, fig. 117, Vitrail de Laon) un exemple très typique de cette attitude si fréquente dans la statuaire mariale. Cf. aussi un passage de *l'Itinéraire de St. Bonaventure*, analysé par M. GILSON, dans: *Les Idées et les Lettres*, Paris, 1932, p. 162 ss.



du *Christ Assis, Entouré de la Vierge et St. Jean*. Ainsi l'action personnelle, la sagesse du juge, est soulignée. *Résurrection, Pèsement des Ames* et *Enfer* sont devenus des détails insignifiants, écrasés, indiqués par pure convenance.

Dans le *Credo* du Sire de Joinville,<sup>16</sup> la prophétie de l'oeuvre correspondant au Jugement Dernier, est "le jugement que vous voyez ci après peint que Salomon fit de deux femmes qui nous signifient la Vielle Loi et la Nouvelle." Joinville continue (traduction par Langlois) : "Il y a quelque chose de noble, et d'honorable, et de profitable en droit jugement, car Salomon dit que justice et droit jugement plaisent plus à Notre Seigneur qu'offrandes ni autres dons." Cette interprétation allégorique est contaminée par l'influence d'un mystère sans quoi on comprendrait difficilement, *malgré Flavius Josèphe*, l'augmentation des personnages qui donnent à la scène cette vie puissante de tension psychologique.<sup>17</sup>

Dans son *Histoire de la Mise en Scène dans le Théâtre Religieux Français du Moyen Age*, M. Gustave Cohen rapporte (p. 263) un passage du *Mistère du Viel Testament* (éd. de Rothschild, t. IV, p. 275) dont ressort la très grande vraisemblance de mon hypothèse. "Les deux mères," écrit M. Cohen, "qui se disputent l'enfant, dans le Jugement de Salomon, sont des filles légères [dans le "Mistère"], dont on nous dépeint les moeurs au naturel et dont l'une dit à son mioche en l'endormant :

"Mais par mon serment  
Congnoistre ne sauroys ton père."

Mais, en supposant un emprunt à ce mystère, l'analyse morphologique force de ne pas y reconnaître le même esprit, caractérisé si bien par M. Cohen. Dans ce relief, l'emprunt reste purement iconographique et limité par "l'interprétation conservatrice" de Joinville. L'imagier accentue la différence entre la vraie mère qui apparaît telle une Sainte en prière (la *Loi Nouvelle* de Joinville) et la femme débauchée aux cheveux épars. Ainsi l'épithète du Livre des Rois est arbitrairement appliqué à la fausse mère (la *Vieille Loi* de Joinville).

L'aspect moral est encore approfondi par la présence du "champion" qui rappelle le sujet "très répandu dans la littérature du Moyen Age de la femme calomniée dont l'innocence est prouvée en combat judiciaire."<sup>18</sup> On constate par conséquent la même pénétration d'esprit chevaleresque avec le fond oriental de la Bible, si caractéristique pour le maître de l'histoire de David et Bethsabée. Cette vision

16. LANGLOIS, *Op. cit.*, tome IV, p. 17. Suivant LANGLOIS, "il est certain que l'édition revue [du 'Credo'] est de 1287."

17. Malheureusement, l'insuffisance des bibliothèques de Montevideo ne me permet pas de pousser plus en avant cette enquête. En dehors du "*Mistère du Viel Testament*," il serait peut-être intéressant de chercher dans le livre de BELIAL, très lu à fin du Moyen-Age, d'autant plus que je relève, dans un fragment imprimé par JOHANNES BÜHLER, dans *Das Deutsche Geistesleben im Mittelalter*, Leipzig, 1927, un passage de réhabilitation d'Urie concordant avec l'interprétation de ce personnage dans les reliefs du portail de droite d'Auxerre. Voir BÜHLER, *Op. cit.*, pp. 323-324.

18. LANGLOIS, *Op. cit.*, tome I, p. 108, note 1, à propos du premier épisode de *Joufrois*.

courtoise peut encore absorber le mystère; elle le transforme et, dans cette transformation, apparaît une conception nouvelle. Des caractères individualisés, présentés dans une taille parfaite, sont perfectionnés par l'apport fertile de l'art gallo-romain à travers lequel est entrevu, découvert, l'art grec. Ils transfigurent le mystère assez réaliste en un monde plus abstrait où règne, au début du XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècle, une morale idéalisée dans une société choisie, attardée, laquelle assiste à la décadence du tournoi, s'ébranle et s'effrite pour se figer et tâcher de conserver artificiellement les valeurs qui lui glissent des mains.

Si, suivant M. Cohen (p. 184), "tout mystère du Moyen Age est un évangile judiciaire . . . l'histoire d'un gigantesque procès entre Paix et Miséricorde d'une part qui veulent sauver l'homme, victime du péché original, et de l'autre côté, Justice et Vérité qui font reconnaître l'étendue de sa faute," le maître de l'histoire de David et Bethsabée prend résolument parti pour Justice et Vérité. Il se défend contre le dualisme pessimiste du Bien et du Mal, par l'affirmation de la Vérité, vue dans le cadre, c'est à dire sous l'angle de la société courtoise — tendance vers la retraite du monde, vers l'art pour l'art courtois, vers le paradoxe de l'intimité monumentale, signe si typique de cette époque encore rigoureuse.

Plus l'art absorbe la réalité et contourne avidement le secret des formes vivantes, plus il creuse un abîme entre art et vie. A Auxerre, l'esprit particulier d'une solution très pure fait sentir un homme qui sut comprendre le "sens historique, allégorique, tropologique et anagogique" de la Bible.<sup>19</sup> Dans l'étude de l'art des ateliers royaux, ses compositions occupent une place primordiale: à Auxerre, "l'unité raffinée" qui a frappé Henri Focillon, est tributaire de cette synthèse d'esprit nouveau de l'"individuel concret"<sup>20</sup> et d'une reconsidération de la notion du vrai dans le cadre de la vie courtoise.

Lorsque, dans le passage précédant celui du *Jugement de Salomon*, l'Eternel apparaît *en songe* au fils de David et Bethsabée et lui dit "Demande ce que tu veux que je te donne" (I *Roi* 3, 5), le jeune roi prie de lui accorder "un coeur intelligent pour juger son peuple et pour discerner le bien et le mal." Cet esprit de discernement n'hésite pas à exposer hardiment le "mal" même au prix de réhabiliter Urie comme dans l'histoire de Bethsabée. Un enthousiasme pur pour cette nouvelle sagesse du désintéressement de la destinée propre ou des richesses, un détachement spéculatif se manifeste dans les interprétations complexes des tailleurs d'images auxerrois et en particulier dans les formes mesurées, dans l'expression vraie et variée et les raffinements spirituels de l'imagier du *Jugement de Salomon* dont on trouvera les correspondances exactes dans la littérature et la philosophie mystique de la première moitié du XIV<sup>e</sup> Siècle.

January 12, 1945.

CLAUDE SCHAEFER.

19. MÂLE, *Op. cit.*, p. 141, et GILSON, *Op. cit.*, p. 147.

20. GILSON, *La Philosophie au Moyen Age*, 1930, p. 245.





# FORGERIES<sup>1</sup> OF MEDIEVAL STONE SCULPTURE

IT IS the obligation of the art historian to give meaning to masterpieces of the past. He can punctuate the pages of history with well chosen selections from known and accepted works of art, and he can discover real values in forgotten or neglected works of art. These objects are to be associated with the evanescent cultures they typify, and they may be given meaning for present and perhaps future generations of civilized peoples. But the historian's activity must stop right there. It is his responsibility to make certain that the milestones he chooses and the cobblestones with which he paves his way are as faithfully selected as are the digits in a mathematical equation or the symbols in a chemical formula.

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1. Except in a few instances which are included to round out the story, objects which could not actually be acquired for the study collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art will not be discussed in this article. It is hoped that the partial publication of this material will be of aid to students.



FIG. 1. — XIV Century. — French statue, before restorations. — Musée Singher, Le Mans, France.

example, a student of medieval art is disappointed, to say the least, when he learns that in almost every instance the sculptures of the façade of the Strasbourg Cathedral have been replaced by modern copies, although he has probably been led to suppose the contrary from publications on the subject. The scholar who knows his material should, of course, do his utmost to avoid mistakes or thoughtless misrepresentations. In the study of forgeries, the originals used for inspiration are, unfortunately, not always available for comparison, even if they are known.

Perhaps one should be indulgent in

Too often writers have based their ideas on inexact information and have reached conclusions unworthy of them. Again and again books are illustrated with pictures of reproductions rather than of the originals themselves. Many a great sculpture is known from casts or copies which at best give a false impression of important characteristics. For

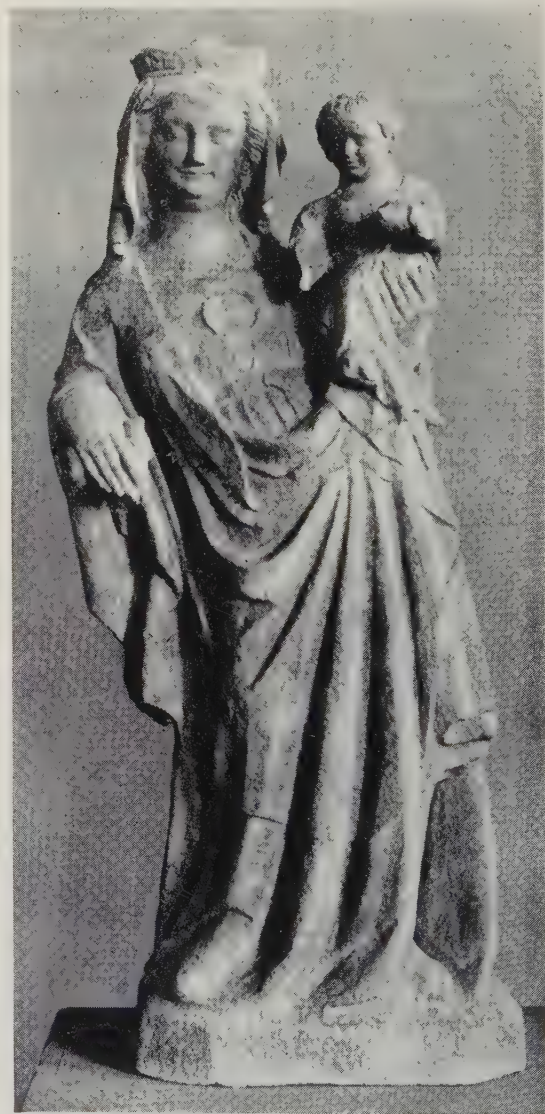


FIG. 2. — XIV Century. — French statue (see Fig. 1), after restorations. — Private Collection, in the United States.



these matters, and yet one cannot help deploring the statement of one author who writes, when a suspected forgery (Fig. 14) is brought to his attention: "In a general survey, like mine, it is impossible to go into every detail as thoroughly as one would like, and I shall be lucky if I have not included



FIG. 3. — XIV Century. — Virgin and Child, as received by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



FIG. 4. — XIV Century. — Virgin and Child (see Fig. 3), with restorations removed.

several things which are not genuinely medieval. There have been so many clever restorers in France that their work, when based on the old, is almost impossible to distinguish after it has been a little weathered. I think I have more than once rejected a genuine figure which has been scraped or patched, as I felt too uncertain about it." It is better to err on the side of over-cautiousness than to accept one's



mistakes apologetically.

The production of spurious, or partly spurious, works of art has been unwittingly encouraged by a collector's natural preference for objects in good condition. In-



FIG. 5. — Virgin and Child, forgery. — Study collections, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

stances are well demonstrated by four photographs (Figs. 1 to 4). A XIV Century statue of one *Virgin and Child* is shown before restoration, and then after being altered to suit some ambitious collector who apparently preferred objects in good state. The



FIG. 6. — XIV — XV Century, — Virgin and Child, School of Lorraine. — Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.





FIG. 7. — XII Century. — French head, with restorations removed.  
— Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



FIG. 8. — XII Century. — French head, with restorations (see  
Fig. 7). — Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



FIG. 9. — French head (modern reproduction of Fig. 7).



FIG. 10. — XII century. — Head of King David, from the Portal  
of St. Anne, Cathedral of Notre-Dame, Paris (see Fig. 7).  
— Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



FIG. 11. — Bust of an Angel (the head is modern). — Study collections, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

the live qualities of the telling original. Even though photographs are particularly ill-suited for the forming of final conclusions, the differences are readily apparent in the illustrations.

The story of the heads we reproduce (Figs. 7 to 9) will give some idea of the intricacies of the problem when art historians are duped by unscrupulous people — who, by the way, seem to have gradually disappeared from the medieval field following the crash of the American stock market in 1929. These two limestone heads were the subject of considerable controversy a few years ago. The owner of the more complete head (Fig. 9) insisted that the Metropolitan Museum's acquisition was a copy of his. No one who has had experience in the field of

other statue is shown after it was restored, and again after the restorations had been removed.

Another type of statue which has seen great favor is the prettified *Virgin and Child*, (Fig. 5) which makes a far handsomer object to live with than a disintegrating medieval document. Certainly, of the two statues here illustrated the average person would prefer to possess the slick-surface example (Fig. 5) to the one (Fig. 6) with the "ugly" face from the XIV or XV Century. But when we become aware of the flatness of the drapery, the absolutely meaningless expression of the faces and the characterless expression of the hands, we prefer



FIG. 12. — Bust of an Angel (detail of Fig. 11, showing the neck under ultra-violet light). — Metropolitan Museum of Art.





FIG. 13. — Bust of an Angel (frontal detail of Fig. 11). — Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



FIG. 14. — Head, forgery. — Jumièges Museum, France.



FIG. 15. — Head, forgery. — Study collections, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



FIG. 16. — Head, forgery (side view of Fig. 15). — Study collections, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



FIG. 17. — Head of a woman. — Study collections, Louvre, Paris.

in particular, the expressiveness of the original in contrast to the emptiness of the copy.

Nevertheless, the owner of the forgery sent it back to Europe, pieced together a story of its having been for a long time in a wall at Beauvais, and put it in the hands of an antiquarian who had no connection with the American scene. Some months later the modern head was for a short time seen on exhibition in one of the great European museums as a new and important acquisition. As luck would have it, I had photographed the two heads side by side

2. The modern appearance of the lips is due to the fact that the restorations could not be removed without possible damage to part of the original.

3. The surface of the original head fluoresced an orange color peculiar to certain Ile-de-France stonework.

medieval sculpture would have supposed for a moment that both heads in question could be genuine. After the restorations<sup>2</sup> were removed from the Museum's piece (Fig. 7), it was even more evident than before that it was the original, and that it had served as a model, point by point, for the modern head. Examined both in strong light and under ultra-violet rays, the stones used, the natural aging, the breaks and the tool-marks, proved beyond question that the head in the Metropolitan Museum was the original.<sup>3</sup> Results of technical observations were substantiated by a comparison of the carving of the forelocks and the hair, the jewels of the crown, the modeling of the features and,



FIG. 18. — Head of an Apostle. — Study collections, Louvre, Paris.





FIG. 19. — XIV Century. — French head of a woman. — Toulouse Museum, France.

there seems to be little doubt that it is a forgery, and it was condemned as such from the photograph" by another archaeologist. It would have been well to rely less on photographs. Further, to condemn the head as a forgery because "it agrees fairly well with Montfaucon's not very detailed engravings on the west doorway of the Church of the Saint-Germain-des-Prés" in Paris, is not reasonable in the light of evidence which has been published elsewhere in the *Metropolitan Museum Bulletin*, vol. XXXV, (1940), pp. 17-19, where I showed that this head was much more like the reproduction of Montfaucon's drawing of the Notre-Dame head of *King David* than that of the Saint-

under ultra-violet light for future record, and it was a simple enough matter to prove that the head which was then in Europe had been in New York for some time, and that its reputed provenience, concocted on the occasion of its last sale, was misleading in the extreme.

Mischievousness or mistakes do not always result in declaring forgeries genuine; sometimes, genuine pieces are condemned as forgeries. A few years ago the Metropolitan Museum acquired the distinguished head of *King David* (Fig. 10), a unique original from the XII Century portal of Saint Anne of Notre-Dame Cathedral, in Paris. One expert had written that "the head is extremely well carved and very attractive; but



FIG. 20 — Head of St. John, forgery (detail of Fig. 22). — Study collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



FIG. 21. — Female figure. — Study collections, Louvre, Paris.

ful and well-understood carving is not that of a faker, even a very skilled one. The interpretation is not mechanical nor is it misunderstood. The softness or sweetness of many forgeries of medieval sculpture is nowhere apparent. There are no signs which betray a modern artist. The direct chiseling of the hair of the Notre-Dame head should be compared to the uncertain treatment of the hair of the head with the crown (Fig. 9).

It would be impossible to tag the vendors and makers of most "medieval" forgeries in stone. The modern head

Germain statue which it was erroneously thought to have imitated. Examined microscopically and under ultra-violet rays, the surfaces of the stone, the breaks and the abrasions are quite unlike those of simulated

antique work. The gold on the crown and other traces of paint resemble examples to be found on old stonework at the Sainte-Chapelle and at the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, not to mention other examples. The direct, force-



FIG. 22. — St. John, forgery. — Study collections, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



FIG. 23. — Virgin of the Annunciation. — Study collections, Berlin Museum.





FIG. 24. — XIV Century. — Apostle from the Rieux Chapel. — Toulouse Museum, France.

were caught unawares by his masterpieces; and as a sculptor, both because of the quality and quantity of his work, he deserves to rank with Bastianini and Dossena in the annals of collecting.

Just before the war, the police records of France and the facilities of various government departments were to have been used in ferreting out the story, but the war has made it impossible to complete certain findings,

considered above, and many of the stone carvings to be discussed in this article, have been attributed, by those few people who were in the know, to a fellow called "Boutron," who worked in Paris for a well known antiquarian but who seems never to have figured prominently by name when these matters were discussed in the Paris law courts. His reputation should have been very great, for many people



FIG. 26. — XIV Century. — Apostle from the Rieux Chapel. — Toulouse Museum, France.



FIG. 25. — XIV Century. — Apostle from the Rieux Chapel. — Toulouse Museum, France.

and besides, certain individuals have died. Some people who apparently should know what took place have conveniently forgotten what happened "so long ago." Lest many of the forgeries and some related pieces in this group be perpetuated, it is perhaps best that they be exposed at this time. They certainly have gone unrecognized by people in high places, for a long time.

*The Bust of an Angel*





FIG. 27. — XIV Century. — Apostle from the Rieux Chapel. — Toulouse Museum, France.

head had been added to part of an old figure. The lower part of the neck, when examined under ultra-violet rays, had a proper amount of penetration<sup>4</sup> which fluoresced more than the inner part of the stone, whereas the upper part of the neck was without any penetration whatsoever.

In the light of accumulated evidence it is not necessary to minimize the acumen of this forger and his Paris atelier. One connoisseur may not like the

(Figs. 11 to 13) makes a good starting point for the study of an important group of forgeries (Figs. 11 to 18, 20 to 23) which is here published for the first time. The drapery and the wings of the angel are so convincing that when the joint in the neckline was carefully concealed with paint and the object made to appear carved from a single block of stone, it was hard to believe that the piece was a forgery. But when a section of the neck was cleaned with benzine, it was easy to see in an ultra-violet light photograph (Fig. 12) that the head is of a different and much darker stone than the lower portion of the bust. Examination of a cross-section of the break showed that a modern



FIG. 28. — Virgin, forgery. — Study collections, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

4. For a fuller discussion see: J. J. RORIMER, *Ultra-violet Rays and Their Use in the Examination of Works of Art*, New York, 1931, figs. 15 and 16, pp. 24-26, and IDEM—*Ultra-violet Rays and a Mino da Fiesole Problem*, in: *Technical Studies in the Field of the Fine Arts*, October 1933, v. II, No. 2, pp. 71-80.





FIG. 29. — St. Catherine. — Study collections, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

twirls of hair, another the flatness of the modeling or the vapid facial expression, but it is necessary to recognize more than one or two distinguishing features which appear again and again in these sculptures. Significant are the treatment of the hair, the half-closed squint of the eyes, the contours above the upper lip, and the profiles of the chins. Sometimes these features (Fig. 13) are almost identical, as in the case of the fillet and forecurls of the angel's head and the similar head. (Cf. Figs. 11, 13, 15 and 16). Often the stone used for these forgeries is what is known as "Paris limestone;" it is fine-grained, and because of age and handling has an almost soapy look. Regular, parallel tool-marks are frequently in evidence and are an important distinguishing feature, although care must be exercised not to condemn all sculptures with comparable marks. In

medieval sculpture tool-marks are usually smoothed down by abrasion on flesh parts and in places where definition in the carving is required. Rarely does a face in a genuine piece have these tool-marks. The colors of the forgeries are almost invariably subdued olive-greens, drab red-purples, or pale pastel colors, but never do they seem to be composed of the rich, natural colors, such as blue made from azurite, or vermillion red made from cinnabar, which the medieval painter used so freely. Invariably the paint



FIG. 30. — St. Catherine. — Study collections, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.



FIG. 31. — Female Bust, forgery. — Study collections, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

has a fine, even crackle which probably results from the application of heat with a blowtorch. In the case of the three heads (Figs. 13, 14 and 15), the paint has been scraped from the face toward the hair line. This habit became part of the forger's technique, although in some instances, as on the head of the young *Saint John* (Fig. 20), considerable paint has been left. The heads (Figs. 17 and 19) have been published as genuine on more than one occasion. The Louvre example is no doubt a copy of the Toulouse head and like the Apostle's head (Fig. 18) has some of the obvious earmarks mentioned above.

Heads alone were not the chief source of the "Paris forger's" livelihood during most of the first three decades of this century. He catered as well to the art market with many a pleasant drawing-room statue, and

seems to have specialized in busts for mantelpieces and *cassoni*. Perhaps the most eloquent of all his productions was the three-quarters life-size statue of *St. John the Evangelist as a Young Boy* (Figs. 20 and 22). Now that we know the earmarks for identifying these forgeries, it is comparatively easy to single them out, whereas previously it was very difficult. The olive-green mantle lined in dark green and the brown hair, are the colors of a forger under pre-Raphaelite influence, rather than of one who might have had a little more courage and followed such actual medieval precedents as are best known in brightly illuminated manuscripts. These are the colors of the restorers of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, not those of the Gothic stained glass or fresco painter. Fifteen years ago Henri Rachou, one of the fine French scholars of the old school, gave credence to my suspicions about the *Saint John* by vouchsafing the information that casts of the statues from the Chapel of Rieux, now in the Toulouse Museum<sup>5</sup> (Figs. 24-27), were delivered about 1910 to a Paris art dealer who in turn was to have presented them to the Trocadero Museum of Casts. The casts seem never to have arrived at the Trocadero and yet

5. HENRI RACHOU, *Le Musée de Toulouse*, vol. I, *Sculpture*. Toulouse, 1905.



adaptations from them are to be found in a host of modern forgeries stemming from the dealer's workshop. The modern statues are usually smaller in scale than the life-size Rieux originals. Belonging to this group are two *Virgins* (Figs. 21 and 23). These and the *Saint John* should be compared with the four sculptures here illustrated from Rieux (Figs. 24 to 27). We find the book with its decoration, the distinctive hands and feet, the hair, the neck and, to a lesser extent, the drapery. As usual, the modern bases were geometrically formed or at least carefully finished. Thus they are more suited for display in private homes and museums than are those of most medieval statues which stand on simulated sections of ground or



FIG. 32. — XIII Century. — Foolish Virgin. — Musée de l'Oeuvre Notre Dame, Strasbourg, France.

just discussed, has certain features, such as the hands and face, which suggest that the forger had an intimate knowledge of the Strasbourg Cathedral sculptures. The Saint Catherine stands on the figure of the Emperor Maximinius in an attitude like that of the female personifications of virtues at Strasbourg. The paint of the statue

were designed to fit in architectural niches. Just as the maker of plaster casts usually finishes off his reproduction with a base which makes it possible for the cast to be placed free-standing on a pedestal, so the forger again and again thinks in terms of his patron's convenience.

Some of the foregoing peculiarities are to be found in a statue (Fig. 28) whose provenience is entirely unknown. Here again the colors are subdued and have an artificial crackle. The book, the right hand, the eyes, the mouth, the chin, the hair, the neck, the sleeve-lines of the dress, and the base, are evidence against the authenticity of the statue. Stylistically, it combines both provincial and accomplished characteristics of French as well as German medieval sculptures.

The statue of Saint Catherine (Fig. 30), like the statue

is different from the crackled paint already referred to above, but it is not old.

Another statue of Saint Catherine (Fig. 29) came into the Museum's collections over thirty years ago. When, at the time information was asked concerning its provenience, the vendor cabled: "We assure you Saint Catherine does not come from any church, but [from a] private castle in Touraine. Regularly purchased as [are] all our objects." Such an answer would surely not suffice for any museum representative making a purchase in 1946. This is one of those impressive large-size statues about which I myself once wrote: "The *Saint Catherine* is more of this world than were her earlier, medieval prototypes." Perhaps my subconscious reasoning was already at work. It was not until recently that it seemed proper to relegate this statue to the class of objects considered "of doubtful authenticity." The facial expression is somewhat vapid; the flat tresses of hair most inept and unconvincing; the hands awkward and lifeless, and the draperies mixed up. In fact, the sculptor has confused his draperies and orphreys to such an extent that it is impossible to single out which is the mantle, which the dress, and which an undergarment. In some places the fur lining of the overmantle is simulated by rough tooling, in others the tooling is omitted altogether. The paint, where it appears, is not medieval and it, too, suggests that there was confusion as to which part of the garments were to be one color and which another. There are no traces of old paint, and when the existing paint is flaked off the stone is almost as fresh as when it was carved. There are many statues here and there in American collections which bear a striking resemblance to this statue. Several of them are busts supposedly made by cutting off the upper half of the statues which probably never existed in their entirety. It is often possible to demonstrate that if the drapery lines were continued below the supposed cut, there would indeed be some strange contours as in the female bust (Fig. 31) inspired by several statues at Strasbourg. A comparison of the upper part of a statue of a *Foolish Virgin* (Fig. 32) reveals the many discrepancies between the medieval sculptor and his imitator. Collectively, these pseudo-medieval sculptures are not as puzzling as they have been individually. Their publication should help in the singling out of many others which still go unrecognized.

January, 1943.

JAMES J. RORIMER.



# SANTE PAGNINI

AND

# MICHELANGELO

## A STUDY OF THE SUCCESSION OF SAVONAROLA

THE study of Michelangelo's religious development suffers from the absence of documents for the central period of his life. We know that in his youth he had been a follower of Savonarola and that he retained, down to the time of Condivi's biography, a vivid recollection of the preacher's doctrine and voice.<sup>1</sup> There is also evidence that at an advanced age he was drawn by Vittoria Colonna into the circle of Contarini and Pole.<sup>2</sup> But between the time when he heard Savonarola's sermons and the beginning of his friendship with Vittoria Colonna lies a period of some forty years during which he conceived the program of the Sistine Ceiling, planned the Julius Tomb and the Medici Chapel, and prepared the designs for the *Last Judgment*.<sup>3</sup> Yet in all these years there is no word of a chosen theological mentor.

The case might be regarded as typical of the secretive character of Michel-

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1. ASCANIO CONDIVI'S *Life of Michelangelo*, LXV (in: CHARLES HOLROYD, *Michael Angelo Buonarroti*, 1903, p. 87.)

2. *Ibid.*, LXIII, p. 84f. The aged Michelangelo was on intimate terms with Lodovico Beccadelli, who had been secretary to Contarini and Pole, and wrote their *Lives*. Beccadelli was also the author of a *Life of Petrarch* (published in: JACOBI PHILIPPI TOMASINI *Petrarcha Redivivus*, 1650, pp. 213-241) and, like Michelangelo himself, a professed Petrarchist. Michelangelo addressed to him the sonnet "*Per croce e grazia, e per diverse pene*" and sent him also "*Le favole del mondo m'hanno tolto . . .*"

3. *The Last Judgment*, executed under Paul III, was planned and designed under Clement VII.

angelo, whose enigmatic habits reflect, to be sure, the fashionable taste of the Renaissance for studied riddles and hieroglyphic conceits.<sup>4</sup> However, a share must also be assigned to our own ignorance of Renaissance theology. The historical study of Catholic doctrine generally stops with the end of the Middle Ages, or at best in the mid-XV Century, and revives only after the Protestant revolutions have supplied a new subject of controversy. The early XVI Century, in particular, is a *terra incognita* of theological thought, often mistaken for a period without theology even though it produced the two greatest theological monuments of the Renaissance, the Sistine Ceiling and the *Disputa*.

And Julius II, who was responsible for both, is commonly regarded as a warrior pope, intent upon reasserting the secular claims of the militant church, and with neither taste nor time for theological subtleties. Yet it is fair to assume that if he tolerated the *Disputa* in his private chamber, and the Sistine frescoes in his private chapel, he must have approved of their subject matter, and in that case he had a greater theological understanding than the historians who claim to know that he had none.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, even his political actions were not entirely free from theological commitments. When, as Cardinal Giuliano della Rovere, he was exposed to persecution by Alexander VI, he became a partisan to the revolutionary aims of Savonarola—whose portrait is included in the *Disputa*; and while the Friar predicted in his sermons in Florence the invasion of Charles VIII, the Cardinal della Rovere was at the French Court and urged the king to descend upon Italy.<sup>6</sup>

### *Savonarola and Julius II*

In the autumn of 1494, Savonarola resumed his sermons on the Ark of Noah and foretold the chastisement of the Florentine people by a political Deluge. "He had preached in Santa Liperata," says a contemporary source,<sup>7</sup> "and closed the Ark just before the descent of the French king into Italy, with certain

4. In his commentary to Benivieni's *Canzona d'Amore*, PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA associated hieroglyphs with pagan mysteries (bk. III, ch. XI, referring to stanza 9). See also the Introduction to Pico's *Heptaplus*, where all sacred writings are declared to be riddlesome, their authors having advisedly veiled their knowledge: "*res divinas ut aut plane non scriberent, aut scriberent dissimulanter. Hinc appellata mysteria, nec mysteria quae non occulta. Hoc . . . ab Aegyptiis observatum. Quod et Sphinges illae pro templis insinuabant. Ab eis edoctus Pythagoras silentii factus est magister.*" Michelangelo's cult of the enigmatic should be regarded as part of this revival and not misconstrued as a purely personal idiosyncrasy, even though his temperament made him one of the most virulent carriers of the contagion. According to LODOVICO DOLCE, his taste for riddles was one of the features which irritated Pietro Aretino (see below, note 44). Even VASARI occasionally confessed his embarrassment: "*E stato nel suo dire molto coperto ed ambiguo, avendo le cose sue quasi due sensi*" (*Vite*, 1550, 1st ed., p. 989; cf. E. STEINMANN, *Michelangelo im Spiegel seiner Zeit*, 1930, p. 11).

5. The legend that Julius II was "not a man of books," has been disproved by LÉON DOREZ, *La Bibliothèque Privée du Pape Jules II*, in: "*Revue des Bibliothèques*," VI, 1896, pp. 97-124.

6. PASQUALE VILLARI, *Life and Times of Savonarola*, London, 1897, bk. II, ch. I, pp. 202, 206.

7. Ms. of CERRETANI'S *Storia*, quoted by VILLARI, *Op. cit.*, p. 188, n. 2. *Santa Liperata* is an old name for the Duomo.



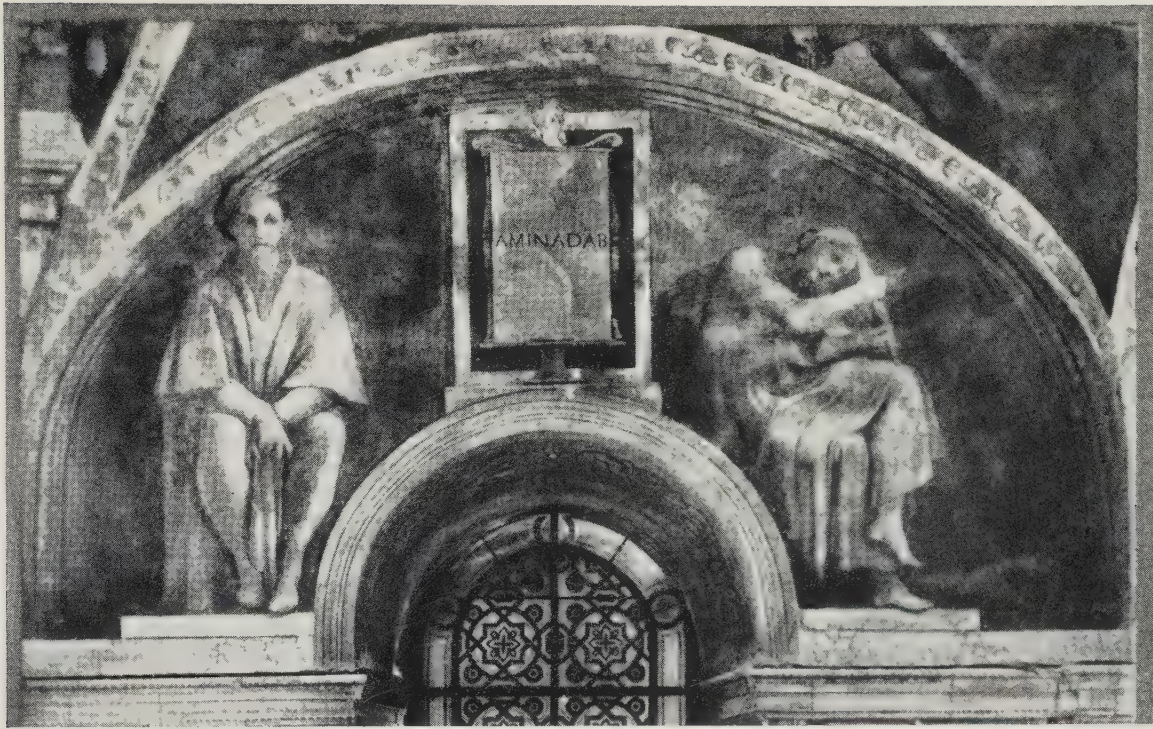


FIG. 1. — MICHELANGELO. — Aminadab. — Lunette from the Sistine Chapel, Rome (complete lunette with tablet).

sermons so full of terrors and alarms, cries and lamentations, that every one went about the city bewildered, speechless and, as it were, half-dead."

Machiavelli, an observer not easily duped, regarded Savonarola's prophecy as little short of miraculous and quoted it in his *Discourses* in support of the belief that great events are preceded by portents and mysterious predictions: "Whence it comes I know not, but both ancient and modern instances prove that no great events ever occur in any city or country that have not been predicted by soothsayers, revelations, or by portents and other celestial signs. And not to go from home in proof of this, everybody knows how the descent into Italy of Charles VIII, king of France, was predicted by Brother Girolamo Savonarola."<sup>8</sup> While Machiavelli was too sceptical to hold the simple belief of the people of Florence that "Brother Girolamo Savonarola held converse with God,"<sup>9</sup> he regarded the phenomenon as too extraordinary to admit of a natural explanation. "To explain these things a man should have knowledge of things natural and supernatural, which I have not. It may be, however, as certain philosophers maintain, that the air is peopled with spirits, who by their superior intelligence foresee future events, and out of pity for mankind warn them by such signs, so that they may prepare against the coming evils."<sup>10</sup>

8. *Discourses*, I, 56 (translated by LUIGI RICCI AND E. R. P. VINCENT, 1940).

9. *Ibid.*, I, 11.

10. *Ibid.*, I, 56.

The accuracy of Savonarola's prediction can nevertheless be explained by natural causes. That there was a secret correspondence between him and the Cardinal della Rovere in France is proved by documents which Machiavelli may have looked upon with suspicion since they were produced by inquisitors intent upon convicting Savonarola, but the evidence is regarded as unassailable by as cautious an historian as Padre Vincenzo Marchese, whose sympathies are on Savonarola's side.<sup>11</sup> Savonarola died as a martyr in a cause to which the Cardinal della Rovere was personally committed. It is little wonder that, as Pope Julius II, he could forget the friar's ordeal as little as Michelangelo could forget his voice.

Students of Michelangelo have, to my knowledge, paid little attention to this historical link between the prior of San Marco whom Michelangelo venerated as a religious prophet, and the Rovere pope in whom he found his most understanding and exacting patron. Nor has the question been raised whether Julius II, after his elevation to the papacy, retained any connection with the theologians at San Marco. The reason may be found partly in the dramatic character of Savonarola himself. Historical interest in his monastery is likely to merge with an interest in his person, and commonly ceases with his death. Hence the role assigned to Savonarola in the biographies of Michelangelo is distressingly similar to that of Pico della Mirandola, who is always mentioned as one of the most forceful figures in the philosophical circle of Lorenzo de' Medici where Michelangelo became first acquainted with the ideas of Neo-Platonism; but when certain of Pico's images re-appear in Michelangelo's late sonnets to Cavalieri and to Vittoria Colonna, the reader is left wondering through what medium or in what circle they survived during the intervening years.

It is true that the first efflorescence of an idea is far more fascinating to examine than its academic codification, and philosophers can hardly be blamed for having been more attracted by the original genius of Pico della Mirandola than by the meticulous tracts of his two nephews.<sup>12</sup> Yet, when the question arises

11. Cf. VILLARI's somewhat guarded quotation, *Op. cit.*, bk. IV, ch. VI, p. 646, n. 2. According to Savonarola's own admission the intermediary at one time was "a certain ser Cristofano, formerly a knight of the Court of Mirandola."

12. Gianfrancesco Pico and Alberto Pio, princes of Mirandola and Carpi, who were among the chief advisers of Julius II when Michelangelo and Raphael began work in the Vatican. Gianfrancesco Pico's writings are joined to those of his uncle in the editions of GIOVANNI PICO's works of 1572-73 and of 1601. His literary character is summarized by L. G. GYRALDUS, *De Poetis Suorum Temporum, Dialogus I*, reprinted in *Opera Omnia* 1696, II, p. 527. Of Alberto Pio's literary engagements the most noteworthy is his conflict with Erasmus: *Alberti Pii tres et viginti libri in locos lucubrationum variarum D. Erasmi*, 1531; which was answered by *D. Erasmi . . . Apologia adversus rhapsodias . . . Alberti Pii*, 1531; answered in turn after Alberto Pio's death by his friend, Genesius de Sepulveda, with whom he had studied under Pomponazzi. SEPULVEDA's *Antapologia pro Alberto Pio* is reprinted in his *Opera*, 1780, which edition also includes his remarkably courteous exchange of letters with Erasmus. On Alberto Pio's relation to Aldus and Erasmus, cf. my note *Aenigma Termini*, in "Journal of the Warburg Institute," I, pp. 66, 69. A complete account of Alberto Pio's political career is given in: H. SEMPER, F. O. SCHULZE AND W. BARTH, *Carpi, ein Fürstentum der Renaissance*, 1882. An anonymous portrait of Alberto Pio, dated 1512, is in the National Gallery in London (Mond Bequest), which, I believe, may have been painted by Giacomo Francia.





FIG. 2. — MICHELANGELO. — Naason. — Lunette from the Sistine Chapel, Rome.

as to how the impetuous humanism of Pico is transmitted and transformed in the severer climate of the XVI Century, the writings of the second generation, however dull, assume the importance of a primary source. The same applies to the succession of Savonarola. The vivacity of his diction and the topical vigor of his sermons are sadly absent from the more labored pursuits of his pupils; but if we are to comprehend the particular shade of religious doctrine expressed in Michelangelo's frescoes of the Sistine Ceiling, we shall find it less in Savonarola's own writings than in those of the learned Sante Pagnini who, respected and honored as Savonarola's successor in the circle of the younger Pico della Mirandola, appears to have been the favorite theologian of Julius II himself.<sup>13</sup>

### *Pagnini's Bible and Isagoge*

Born in Lucca about 1470, Sante Pagnini joined the Dominican Order at the age of sixteen and was trained in Fiesole, where he became a disciple of

13. GUGLIELMO PAGNINO, *Vita di S. Pagnino Lucchese, dell' Ordine de' Predicatori*, Roma, 1653. For summaries of Pagnini's literary history see: QUÉTIF AND ECHARD, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum*, 1721, II, pp. 114ff, 824; A. TOURON, *Histoire des Hommes Illustres de l'Ordre de Saint Dominique*, 1747, IV, pp. 85-92; LE P. DOMINIQUE DE COLONIA, *Histoire Littéraire de la Ville de Lyon*, 1730, II, pp. 595-601.



FIG. 3. — MICHELANGELO. — Boaz. — Lunette from the Sistine Chapel, Rome.

Savonarola. Compared with the political fervor of his teacher, his temperament inclined toward sobriety, for he was attracted by the philological aspect of sacred studies and became an authority on the Hebrew language. His Hebrew Grammar and Hebrew Dictionary, the most widely distributed of his books, are apt to produce the erroneous impression that he was primarily a grammarian.<sup>14</sup> His success as a preacher, however, is attested by his numerous conversions, his effectiveness as an administrator by his repeated election as prior,<sup>15</sup> and his constructive power as a theologian by the formidable scale on which he planned his two most ambitious, and equally ill-fated, enterprises in the field of Sacred Letters.

The first of these was a new Latin translation of the Bible,<sup>16</sup> at which he worked for thirty years so that it appeared at the unfavorable moment (1528) when its meticulous erudition, disdainful of the charms of eloquence, was easily put out of fashion by the more daring translations into the vernacular, as well as by the more elegant Latin version of Erasmus.<sup>17</sup> His knowledge of Hebrew, however, carried such weight that Pagnini's *Bible* became the authoritative body from which to quote the Old Testament. But even in outmoded garb, philological acumen applied to a sacred text is liable to embarrass revealed religion. Apparently an archaic relic, Pagnini's *Bible* was adopted and sent forth in a splendid edition (1542) by Michael Servetus,<sup>18</sup> the

14. *Hebraicae Institutiones*, Lyon, 1526; *Thesaurus Linguae Sanctae*, Lyon, 1529.

15. The dates of Pagnini's early history have been compiled from the archives of the monasteries of San Marco in Florence, Santo Spirito in Siena, and San Romano in Lucca by PADRE VINCENZO MARCHESE, *Memorie dei Più Insigni Pittori, Scultori e Architetti Domenicani*, 2nd ed., Florence, 1854, II, p. 108, n. 2. According to these records, Pagnini was prior of San Marco in Florence from 1504 to 1506, of Santo Spirito in Siena from 1506 to 1507, of San Romano in Lucca from 1507 to 1509. From 1511 to 1513 he was again prior of San Marco in Florence, and from 1513 to 1515 again superior of San Romano in Lucca. This information has escaped the standard reference works, including the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, in which the article on Pagnini is surprisingly incomplete and unreliable. For the erroneous date of Pagnini's death, see below, note 79.

16. *Biblia: Utriusque Instrumenti Nova Translatio*, Lyon, 1527 (1528).

17. Luther's translation of the New Testament appeared in 1522, of the complete Bible in 1534. Erasmus' *Novum Instrumentum* had been published in 1516. In 1515 he had already spoken in favor of the use of vernacular versions for laymen: *Legant et idiotae legem Domini quacumque lingua* (*Opera*, Leyden, 1704, V, p. 183), thus supporting the development which had begun with the printing of German Bibles in the 1460s, and of the Malermi Bible in 1471 (cf. *Catalogue of Books Printed in the XV Century now in the British Museum*, part III, 1913, p. xiii; part VII, 1935, p. xxii). The Italian translation by BRUCIOLI, who was suspected of Protestant leanings (cf. D. CANTIMORI, *Eretici Italiani del Cinquecento*, 1939), began to appear in 1530 (New Testament) and was completed in 1532. Brucioli's rendering was already based on the Latin text of PAGNINI. CONDIVI (*Op. cit.*, p. 78) mentions BRUCIOLI as a personal acquaintance of Michelangelo.

18. MICHAEL SERVETUS, *Biblia Sacra ex Santis Pagnini tralatione . . . recognita et scholiis illustrata*, 1542.



author of *De Trinitatis Erroribus*, who was declared a heretic by the Catholic Church (1553) and obligingly burned by Calvin. The discipleship of Savonarola may have been latently active in Pagnini when, in producing a learned anachronism, he supplied — perhaps inadvertently — the material for a revolutionary manifesto. In the orthodox history of Catholic dogma, Pagnini's *Bible* has been rather ill received ever since.<sup>19</sup>

Pagnini's second great work, an encyclopedic attempt to codify the mystical interpretations of the Scripture,<sup>20</sup> was spared the disgrace of heretical approval; but with the growing insistence on the literal reading of the Bible, it became old-fashioned as quickly as the first. The book is a great allegorical superstructure on his grammatical labors and carried out with the same meticulous care. Published in the year of his death by his friend Symphorien Champier, who declared it to represent the accumulated labors of Pagnini's life, the treatise is divided into seventeen books (*Isagogae ad Mysticos Sacrae Scripturae Sensus libri XVII*) and prefaced by an Introduction to Sacred Letters (*Isagogae ad Sacras Literas liber unicus*) conceived after the model of St. Augustine.<sup>21</sup> Though rarely quoted and soon forgotten, the book represents the biblical *Summa* of the Italian Renaissance. In the hands of a casual historian of art, it might easily share the fate of Ripa's *Iconologia*, for the subjects are presented in alphabetical order, and spurious knowledge can be quickly acquired. But the danger is mitigated by the defects of the system. The alphabetical arrangement hides rather than reveals the richest treasures,

19. Adverse criticisms are quoted by QUÉTIF AND ECHARD, *Loc. cit.*, and in RICHARD SIMON, *Histoire Critique du Vieux Testament*, new edition, 1685, I, pp. 314, 316 ("... détruit la vérité de nos mystères . . . nimis ambitiosa, nimis curiosa, nimis grammatica, nimium Rabbinicarum minutiarum aemula . . .," etc.). The connection of Pagnini and Serveto is, naturally, very awkward. The Père de Colonia charged the "heresiarch" not only with having used Pagnini's Bible as a cover for his own pernicious doctrines, but with having fraudulently ascribed to Pagnini the authorship of emendations which he himself had made (*Histoire Littéraire de la Ville de Lyon*, *Loc. cit.*; see also: QUÉTIF AND ECHARD, *Op. cit.*, II, p. 117). However, Serveto hardly required this cover eleven years before he was declared a heretic and at a time when he published far more radical doctrines unhesitatingly under his own name. Moreover, he and Pagnini had a common friend in Symphorien Champier, who became Pagnini's literary executor. There is no reason, therefore, to question that Serveto had access to Pagnini's papers.

20. S. PAGNINI LUCENSIS . . . *Isagogae ad Sacras Literas liber unicus. Eiusdem Isagogae ad Mysticos Sacrae Scripturae Sensus libri XVII*, Lugduni, 1536. To avoid misunderstanding, the reader may wish to remember that the word "mystical," as applied to scriptural interpretation, has a strict technical sense and is the opposite of "literal," not of "rational," inasmuch as the mystical interpretation has its own *rationale*, which is that of prophetic adumbration. The literal understanding of any passage — Moses' account of the Brazen Serpent, for example, at the sight of which the sinners are healed from poisonous snake bites — is concerned with the event actually told, whereas the mystical interpretation refers to the event which the story foreshadows; in this instance, the Crucifixion: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (*St. John* III, 14-15). The instrument for establishing these correspondences or adumbrations is, of course, the *Concordance*.

The terms "mystical" and "allegorical" are used interchangeably as late as the XVII Century (Rubens, for instance, calls the allegorical figures of the Medici Cycle *figure mystiche* in his letters); but as the word "allegorical" acquired the connotation of an arbitrarily defined picture language in the XVIII Century and has ever since been employed to castigate the abuse of a verbal exercise in a non-verbal medium, it is advisable to retain in our context the term "mystical" which implies a religious initiation.

21. On the general revival of Augustinian studies, cf. PAUL OSKAR KRISTELLER, *Augustine and the Early Renaissance*, in "The Review of Religion," 1944, pp. 339-358.

and subjects which would not seem to be discussed at all if one were to trust the headings or the index, crop up at unexpected places. No obvious reference, for instance, indicates that the book gives decisive information on that most tantalizing problem of the Sistine Ceiling, Michelangelo's representation of the Ancestors of Christ.



FIG. 4A. — MICHELANGELO. — Jechonias. — Lunette from the Sistine Chapel, Rome.

### *The Genealogy of Christ in Renaissance Theology*

Although Michelangelo's lunettes in the Sistine Chapel carry on large tablets the names of the Genealogy of Christ according to St. Matthew, it has been persistently asserted by historians of art that there is no relation between the names and the corresponding figures. What indeed could such names as Naason or Mathan signify when there are no historical accounts connected with them in the Bible? As for the few names which do have historical connotations, such as Boaz, David or Solomon, Michelangelo seems to have attached them to figures which bear no resemblance to the characters in the historical narrative. The most conservative view is to assume that Michelangelo let his imagination run free, and depicted family scenes with a definite mood but no particular meaning because, in illustrating the *Book of Generations*, he had "nothing but names" to go on.<sup>22</sup>

22. CARL JUSTI, *Michelangelo*, 1900, p. 153, went so far as to describe these people as "nameless" even though their names are written next to them on large tablets. More recently, TOLNAY suspects that they represent "the antinomies of domestic life" (CARLO TOLNAY, *La Volta della Capella Sistina*, in: "Bollettino d'Arte," 1936, XXIX, p. 403; CHARLES DE TOLNAY, *The Sistine Ceiling*, 1945, p. 78).



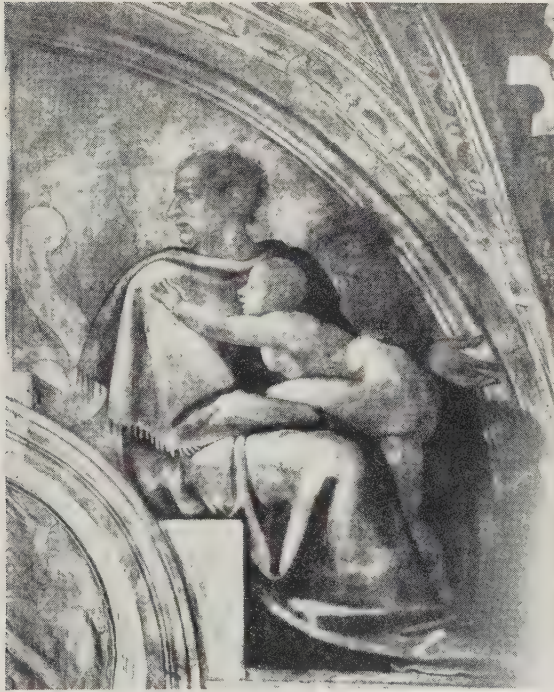


FIG. 4B. — MICHELANGELO. — Jechonias. — Lunette from the Sistine Chapel, Rome.

so that the reader may ponder over their moral and mystical significance. When a name seemed to signify nothing (the name of Joel's father, for instance), St. Jerome changed the spelling of the Septuagint by a simple conjecture so that it made sense;<sup>23</sup> for the assumption that a name could mean nothing appeared to him, and to all the generations of Biblical commentators who followed his example, as a contradiction in terms. However fantastic this procedure may

23. *Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum. De Situ et Nominibus Locorum Hebraicorum Liber*, ed. PAUL DE LAGARDE (*Onomastica Sacra*, 1870, pp. 1-159).

24. *Hieronymi Commentaria in Joelem*, Cap. 1 (*Patrologia Latina* XXV, col. 949). *Glossa Ordinaria*, Joel I, 1: "Hieronymus: Phatuel propheta pater Johel prophetae a LII interpretibus Bathuel vocabatur. Sed cum bathuel in hebraeo nihil omnino sonet, melius est ut legatur Phatuel: quod interpretatur latitudo."

Names, to be sure, are meaningless in the literal understanding of the Scripture, but they have power to arouse mystical speculation more strongly than words of ordinary connotation. To the early commentators of the Bible, trying to emulate Origen in exploring the metaphorical allusions and prophetic secrets which they thought to be hidden in the sacred text, no part of the Bible was more attractive than the long lists of Hebrew names in the genealogies and itineraries — lists which tax the patience of the modern reader because they convey to him "nothing but names." St. Jerome compiled a comprehensive dictionary of biblical names<sup>23</sup> in which the Hebrew names are translated into Latin

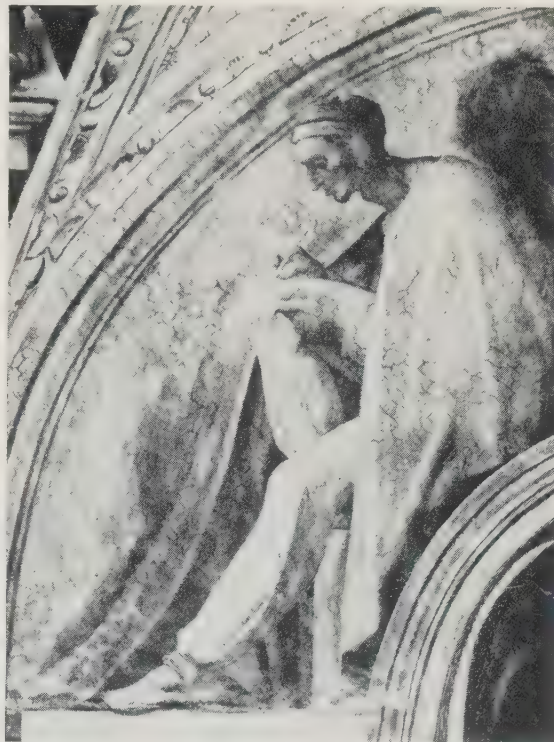


FIG. 5. — MICHELANGELO. — Josaphat. — Lunette from the Sistine Chapel, Rome.

seem, it has biblical authority on its side; for in the accounts of the Bible the naming of a child is always based on a commemorative or prophetic argument. "And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh [which means 'forgetful']. For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil . . . And the name of the second called he Ephraim [which means 'fruitful']: For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction" (*Genesis XLI*, 51-52). The name of Joshua [which means 'salvation'] is given to Christ; "for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew I, 21); and the name of Jochanaan [which means 'preparing'] to John the Baptist; "for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways" (Luke I, 76). In the Sistine Ceiling, the names and pictures of the Genealogy of Christ are placed in the intervals between the Prophets and Sibyls so that there can be no doubt they are meant to be seen and read in a prophetic context.

An interest in genealogies, one of the pervasive obsessions of tribal thinking, is not confined in the Renaissance to social and legal pursuits, but extends to poetical fancy and religious piety. The legendary ancestry which Renaissance poets seem interminably preoccupied with ascribing to their patrons—the most famous being Ariosto's genealogy of the Este—has its religious counterpart in the enormous expansion of the cult of the Holy Family, embracing not only the blood relations of Christ but even the two husbands of St. Anne who followed Joachim, with all the branches of their respective families.<sup>25</sup> The medieval figure of the Tree of Jesse was supplemented, under Carmelite influence, by a Tree of Emerentiana, the mother of St. Anne.<sup>26</sup> Even so, the schematic figure of a tree no longer sufficed to harbor all the exotic physiognomies of those forebears whose cumulative power of intercession the faithful were eager to invoke. A new sense of historical intimacy, combined with a heightened sense of the mysterious, pervades the crowded settings of the *Heilige Sippe* filled with legendary characters realistically portrayed (Figs. 6 to 9). The weird and pathetic features, occasionally verging on the grotesque, by which Michelangelo characterized the Ancestors of Christ (Figs. 1 to 5), are expressive of the same new form of mystical piety which received theological support, *mirabile dictu*, from the grow-

25. On the triple marriage of St. Anne (*Trinubium Annae*) see: BEDA KLEINSCHMIDT, *Die Heilige Anna*, 1930, pp. 252ff. A characteristic outgrowth of trinitarian speculation of a kind particularly associated with St. Anne (*Heilige Anna Selbdritt*), the doctrine asserted that the biblical "three Marys" were daughters of St. Anne by three different husbands. In the background of Cranach's *Heilige Sippe* in Vienna (Akademie der Bildenden Künste), these three husbands of St. Anne are combined into a grotesque group (Figs. 9 and 10), not unlike the enigmatic design by Grünewald of a haloed trinity of deformed old faces (Fig. 11). Did this drawing perhaps refer to a lost altarpiece of St. Anne? The exoticism in the Renaissance cult of the *magna mater Dei* would be more in keeping with Grünewald's temper than the blasphemous anti-trinitarian intents absurdly imputed to so devout a painter. On the growing criticism and final rejection of the *Trinubium Annae* in the XVI Century, cf. EMILE MÂLE, *L'Art Religieux de la Fin du Moyen Age*, 1925, p. 218, KLEINSCHMIDT, *Op. cit.*, pp. 259ff. Characteristic of the opposition is AGRIPPA VON NETTELSHEIM's *De Beatissimae Annae Monogamia*, 1534.

26. KLEINSCHMIDT, *Op. cit.*, pp. 252ff.





FIG. 6. — ANONYMOUS. — The Holy Kin. — Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck.

ing cult of the Immaculate Conception.

To those unacquainted with the logic of ritual, it must seem, and has seemed, the height of paradox that the worship of the Virgin as immaculately conceived should have fostered the religious portrayal of her many relatives conceived in sin. The approach to the most sacred mystery, however, has always been sought with the help of chosen intermediaries, placed by Providence close to the object of worship without being inaccessiblely far removed from the worshipper. The cult of the Immaculate

Conception of the Virgin makes her reside at such an exalted height, that she appears inapproachable to the abject sinner. He feels an increased need for intercessors who might fittingly approach her in his stead. And what is more natural than piously to assume that this role might suitably be played by her relatives?

In these more or less distant uncles and cousins, more or less virtuous or sinful people of her tribe, the worshipper could comfortingly recognize his approximate equals, thus bridging the gulf between the pure and the impure and acquiring a feeling of consolation in which his sense of awe was mitigated by a sense of familiarity.<sup>27</sup> Emile Mâle discovered, in studying the religious art of the XV and XVI Centuries, that representations of the genealogy of Christ are regular concomitants to the new cult of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>28</sup> The Office of the

27. By virtue of this approximation, the secular family cult could literally merge with the sacred, as in Cranach's altarpieces of the *Heilige Sippe* in Frankfurt-am-Main and Vienna (Figs. 8 and 9), where the families of the donors are portrayed in the semi-sacred characters of the Genealogy. The same applies to Striegl's *Portrait of Maximilian and his Family* in Vienna, which originally carried corresponding inscriptions. Holbein's *Family of Thomas More*, with only four men placed in a setting of women, seems also to imitate a *Holy Kin*, as in the painting by Massys.

28. MÂLE, *Op. cit.*, p. 217.

feast was illustrated in Renaissance missals by a picture of the genealogy according to St. Matthew.<sup>29</sup> As this feast was newly sanctioned and fostered by Sixtus IV,<sup>30</sup> his own chapel, dedicated to the immaculate Virgin in her glory, would seem the natural place for such a representation.<sup>31</sup> Far from indulging in a personal whim by framing the ceiling with this seemingly abstruse cycle of paintings, Michelangelo conformed to the liturgical dedication of the chapel and presumably carried out an explicit order of Julius II to continue faithfully the

29. The Genealogy according to St. MATTHEW I was the Gospel text of the feast (cf. ROBERT LIPPE, *Missale Romanum Mediolani 1474: A Collation With Other Editions Printed Before 1570*, 1899-1907, II, pp. 166f.) The same text was read on the feasts of the Nativity and the Presentation of the Virgin (*ibid.*, I, p. 377; II, p. 251). The relation between the Genealogy according to St. MATTHEW and the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is expounded to the fullest in: HIERONYMUS DE GUEVARA, *Commentaria in Matthaeum, Tomi Primi Pars Secunda: De Augustissimo Immaculatae Marianae Conceptionis Mysterio*, 1640, a large quarto volume comprising 662 pages of commentary on MATTHEW I only.

30. Sixtus IV issued three bulls on the Immaculate Conception and ordered two new offices for the feast to be written by LEONARDO NOGAROLO and by BERNARDINO DE BUSTI. He also instituted new festivals of St. Joseph and St. Anne, fostering the growth of that intimate worship of the Holy Family which became so pervasive a feature of Renaissance art that we hardly ever inquire into its origin.

DE BUSTI's *Mariale* (1st complete edit., 1493) is an impressive monument of this mystical piety which connects the papal reign of Sixtus IV with his earlier history as a Franciscan friar. His eminence as a theologian is attested by so fastidious a judge as Pius II (*Commentarii*, Frankfurt, 1614, pp. 278-292), and acknowledged, in spite of his presumed share in the Pazzi Conspiracy, by his political enemies in Florence. In a treatise dedicated to Lorenzo de' Medici, PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA praises Sixtus for having explored the obscurities of the Cabala (*Apologia*, Introduction; also *Oratio*, Conclusion). On Sixtus' cabalistic studies cf. JOSEPH L. BLAU, *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance*, 1944, pp. 13, 19.

31. To the confusion of later historians, the chapel built by Sixtus IV in the choir of St. Peter's, decorated by Perugino and harboring Sixtus' tomb until the structure was pulled down in 1609, shared the name of *Capella Sistina* with the so-called "palace chapel" in the Vatican to which the name is confined today. The former was dedicated to the *Immaculata*, St. Francis and St. Anthony of Padua; the latter to the *Assunta*, St. Lawrence and St. Bartholomew (cf. note 32). The cults of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin and of her Assumption became so closely connected that they were sometimes combined in one chapel, for example, in S. Frediano in Lucca (Montgomery Carmichael, *Francia's Masterpiece, An Essay on the Beginnings of the Immaculate Conception in Art*, 1909, pp. 73ff.); and undoubtedly the two cults had a common root also in Sixtus' worship, since in the dedication



FIG. 7. — The Holy Kin, from the *Encomium Trium Mariarum*, 1529.

of the palace chapel to the *Assunta* the Virgin explicitly carries the appellation of *Immaculata*. As a result, the two chapels have been occasionally confused even by L. PASTOR, *The History of the Popes*, 1900, IV, p. 394, and BEDA KLEINSCHMIDT, *Op. cit.*, p. 134.





FIG. 8. — LUCAS CRANACH. — The Holy Kin. — Städelches Institut, Frankfurt-a-M.

theological tradition of his uncle.<sup>32</sup> Julius himself, as Cardinal della Rovere, had celebrated the first high mass in the newly built chapel of Sixtus IV. It is hardly conceivable that as pope, he should have become so indifferent to the theological implications of Michelangelo's program as to give him full freedom to paint "what he pleased."<sup>33</sup>

There is no reason to doubt Michelangelo's assertion that the original plan for the painting of the Ceiling was altered and widened at his own request. In the place of the Twelve Apostles he painted the Prophets and Sibyls and filled the center of the vault with the stories from *Genesis* instead of treating it as "*un partimento ripieno d'adornamenti come si usa*."<sup>34</sup> From this deprecatory phrase

32. Even the design of the *Last Judgment* still refers, as is natural in a painting over the altar, to the original dedication of the Chapel under Sixtus IV. While the leading positions assigned to St. Lawrence and St. Bartholomew are without parallel in representations of the Last Judgment, they are fully explained by the fact that the Chapel was dedicated not only to the *Assunta*, whom Michelangelo placed at the side of Christ, but also to St. Lawrence and St. Bartholomew, on whose days Sixtus had been elected and crowned pope. This explains the triple celebration (August 9th, 15th and 24th, 1483) when the Chapel was completed. For the dates of these three celebrations cf. PASTOR, *Op. cit.*, IV, p. 467f; E. STEINMANN, *Die Sixtinische Kapelle*, 1901, I, p. 127.

33. This is claimed by Michelangelo in a letter written almost sixteen years after the event and under the threat of a lawsuit by the heirs of Julius II (G. MILANESI, *Le Lettere di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, 1875, no. cclxxxiii, p. 426). Though it was in Michelangelo's interest to prove that the program originally proposed by the pope and contracted for three thousand ducats was far more modest than the one he executed, the letter is generally accepted at face value and quoted in support of the untenable theory that Julius gave Michelangelo *carte blanche* to invent his own program.

34. MILANESI, *Loc. cit.*

of Michelangelo's or even from his corresponding sketch (Fig. 12), it has been found difficult to picture the original plan for the central part of the vault as anything more than an aggregate of geometrical figures. However, since the Genealogy of Christ is so closely connected with the dedication of the chapel, it was probably not introduced into the program as an afterthought. It is more likely that it was planned from the beginning, possibly even as the central feature of the whole design, in the semi-geometrical form of a Tree of Jesse filling the long plain surface of the vault. Michelangelo's sketch for the first version, if expanded in proportion to the length of the Ceiling, is fully compatible with this view (Fig. 13).<sup>35</sup>

According to this hypothesis, Michelangelo would have transferred the theme of the genealogy from the center of the vault to the margins and thus gained the space to represent the story of the Creation. But while expanding, he would not have violated the original liturgical sense of the program. For the "generations of heaven and earth" described at the beginning of Genesis (II, 4) were prophetically connected through the Concordance with the *Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ (Liber Generationis)* which marks the beginning of the Gospels (Matthew I, 1).<sup>36</sup> The Prophets and Sibyls also, to whom Michelangelo assigned the most prominent places, appear on traditional representations of the Tree of Jesse as attendants of the Ancestors, foretelling the glory of their progeny and exhibiting the gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>37</sup> All the essential features of the program seem thus developed from, and remain related to, the theme of the Genealogy, the book of generation. But the theme is expanded on such a scale that the Ancestors themselves become relegated to the position of marginal figures; and this has the advantage that they can be pictured as homely characters, which would not have been possible in the center of the ceiling and under the

35. This may be illustrated by even so remote an object as the *Tree of Jesse* on the ceiling of St. Michael's in Hildesheim (Fig. 14). As for the series of interconnected medallions with which Michelangelo framed the central panels, they would not be unsuitable for a genealogical tree (Fig. 15).

36. CORNELIUS A LAPIDE (*Commentaria in Quattuor Evangelia*, 1660, pp. 43ff.) declares bluntly: *Porro Matthaeus imitatur Moysen*, quoting Petrus Damianus (*Sermo de S. Matthaeo*, cf. *Patrologia Latina* CXLIV, col. 778). ". . . ut enim ille (Moyses) nascentis mundi texit originem: sic iste (Matthaeus) tamquam spiritualis cuiusdam mundi orientem descripsit Ecclesiae novitatem, unde . . . provisum est, ut uterque . . . unum idemque suis libris praemitteret initium, dicens: Liber generationis." See also GUEVARA, *Op. cit.*, p. 19: "Ex hoc titulo (i.e. liber generationis) similitudinem evincunt sacri interpretes inter primordialis creaturae genesim et Christi generationem, ut incarnationis oeconomiam quandam proportionem cum prima mundi molitione habuisse credamus."

Moreover, the epistle text *Proverbs* VIII, 22-ff. ("*Dominus possedit me in initio . . .*"), which was read on the relevant feasts of the Virgin as counterpart to the gospel text of the Genealogy according to Matthew (see above, note 29), stressed the connection with the story of the Creation: "*Quando preparabat celos aderam, quando certa lege et giro vallabat abissos: quando ethera firmabat, sursum et librabat fontes aquarum: Quando circumdabat mari terminum suum, et legem ponebat aquis ne transirent fines suos: Quando appendebat fundamenta terrae . . .*" BERNARDINO DE BUSTI restated this view when he wrote what amounts to a paraphrase of the program of the Sistine Ceiling: "*Generatio ipsius (i.e. Virginis) et parentum suorum figurata fuit in creatione mundi*" (*Mariale, Pars II, Sermo III . . . Pars prima huius sermonis quae dicitur creationis*). See also below, note 43.

37. Cf. A. WATSON, *The Early Iconography of the Tree of Jesse*, 1934, p. 148; also pp. 9ff, 54ff, 68, 169f. See also the Introduction by W. L. SCHREIBER to *Oracula Sibyllina*, ed. P. HEITZ, 1903.



restricting schematism of a genealogical tree.<sup>38</sup>

For his characterization of the Forebears of Christ, Michelangelo had ample material from which to draw, for the subject had become a customary theme of sermons on Feasts of the Virgin, and the most celebrated of these were accessible in print.<sup>39</sup> St. Antonine of Florence, the founder of the theological school of San Marco, had written such a sermon on the Genealogy of Christ, which was incorporated in his *Summa*. Savonarola, too, in his sermon on *Ruth*, gave a mystical interpretation of the genealogy of Boaz which coincides with the first section of the Genealogy of



FIG. 9. — LUCAS CRANACH. — The Holy Kin. — Academy, Vienna.

38. In the original plan, the Forebears of Christ would have appeared above the Twelve Disciples, and these in their turn above the Popes, their successors. This simple hierarchy in its triple gradation would have illustrated the historical genealogy of the Church, to whose glory—in the mystical image of the glorified Virgin—the Chapel was dedicated. But such a linear procession, although very much in keeping with Sixtus' original plan, might well have appeared platitudinous to Michelangelo, who called it "*cosa povera*."

39. Some of the most instructive of these sermons, including a Pseudo-Alcuin, are collected in the Renaissance *Homeliarius* under the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin (*Homeliarius Doctorum in Evangelia . . . per Anni Cursum*, Basileae, 1506; earlier editions, 1482, 1493, 1494, 1498). The theme had become so fashionable that it was made the subject of a forgery by ANNIUS OF VITERBO, who included in his spurious *Antiquitates* (first published in 1498) a chapter on the Genealogy of Christ. Being a Dominican, he was attacked by SAMUEL CASSINENSIS, an irascible character and professional pamphleteer, who also wrote a diatribe against Savonarola, to which GIANFRANCESCO PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA replied in his *Defensio Hieronymi Savonarolae Adversus Samuelem Cassinensem* (reprinted 1615). Characteristically, SAMUEL was aroused against ANNIUS OF VITERBO, not by the latter's imposture, of which he had no suspicion, but by ANNIUS' irreverent treatment of Nicolaus de Lyra whom he had ridiculed as *Nicolaus delirans*. SAMUEL's polemical reply was printed in 1502 under the title *De Genealogia Salvatoris* and is not without interest as the statement, by a very subaltern mind, of a problem which he recognized to be popular. It is curious that the most comprehensive treatise on the mystical interpretation of the Genealogy, written by a Spanish Franciscan, was published in the XVIII Century: *De temporali, humana et mystica D. N. Jesu Christi generatione observatio genealogica, panegirica, mystica, dogmatica et moralis super primum caput S. Matthei . . . auctore fr. Isidoro a S. Michaelae . . . Neapoli, 1704*. The book which is today extremely rare (the only copy known to me is in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, D. 3156), was reviewed in the "*Acta Eruditorum*" with some astonishment at the survival of this *ingeniosa pietas*.



FIG. 10. — LUCAS CRANACH. — The Three Husbands of St. Anne. — Academy, Vienna. (Detail from Fig 9, see footnote 25.)

Christ.<sup>40</sup> Pagnini's *Isagoge* completes the tradition. Though the method employed in these sermons and treatises may seem very enigmatic, it is not too difficult to master.

To extract the secret from a Hebrew name, it is first necessary to find the Latin equivalent in the *Onomasticon* of St. Jerome (or in the appendix of a Renaissance Bible). The Latin translation, which generally consists of one or two words, for example, *magister confusionis* for the name Zorobabel, makes little sense unless a passage is found in the Bible in which these words are expanded into a full sentence — for example, "*deus non est magister confusionis sed pacis*" (*I Corinthians XIV*, 37). On the authority of this particular passage the name Zorobabel may be understood as a cryptic reference to the virtue of Peace.

It goes without saying that for many names, though not necessarily for all of them, a large number of biblical passages are available which yield entirely different results. But far from discouraging the commentators, this fact seems to have stimulated their ingenuity. It is one of the intriguing features of the mystical imagination that it does not accept the logical principle of the "excluded middle."

40. Savonarola's preoccupation with riddles of this kind is apparent in his little dialogue *Della Verità Prophetica*. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit appear to him in the guise of seven Orientals, whose exotic Hebrew names (Uria, Eliphaz, Rechima, Iechima, Thoralméd, Abbacuc, Saphtham) are each translatable into a spiritual power, and form together the acrostic *Veritas*. They introduce themselves to Savonarola by saying: "*Noi siamo orientali venuti di peregrine e longinque regioni: la stirpe nostra è antiquissima: ilche testificano li nostri nomi per rispetto alla antichità di epta prima lingua.*" Acrostic verbalisms are of course in the best prophetic tradition, as may be seen in the Sibylline Oracles. The markedly cerebral character of the device, notwithstanding its use in jocose compositions, forms part of the pathology of obsessional literature.





FIG. 11. — MATTHIAS GRUENEWALD. — Drawing. — Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin. (See footnote 25.)

scendants in order to include an adulteress.<sup>42</sup> These sinners, no less than those who are free from sin, are the antecedents of Christ; for the "Coming of Christ" sig-

Apparently incompatible interpretations enrich rather than confuse the argument, and perhaps the fairest way of describing the process is to call it a drill in the use of the Concordance, a game of riddles which, by allowing for different and equally legitimate answers, is meant to bring the knowledge of the Bible into full play.<sup>41</sup>

According to St. Antonine of Florence, all the names in the Genealogy of Christ express virtues because none but the virtuous could be ancestors of the Saviour. But a more liberal opinion, which can be traced in Savonarola's sermons and to which we shall find Michelangelo adhering, laid stress on the fact that among the persons listed as Christ's ancestors there are, besides respectable kings and patriarchs, notorious liars and criminals, and that at several points the genealogy deviates from its normal practice of mentioning only the male de-



FIG. 12. — MICHELANGELO. — Sketch of first plan for the Sistine Ceiling. — British Museum, London.

41. I invite the reader to play the game for half an hour. He will find that, inadvertently, he has acquired a store of Biblical quotations.

42. Cf. CORNELIUS A LAPIDE, *Op. cit.*, p. 45; S. JEROME, *Commentaria in Evang. Matth.*, Lib. I, Cap. I (*Patrologia Latina*, XXVI, col. 22C); S. AUGUSTINE, *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, Lib. II, Cap. 1-4 (*Patrol. Lat.*, XXXIV, col. 1071-77).

nifies a battle of the Virtues against the Vices. As the virtues progressively overcome the vices, Christ is mystically born in the human soul.<sup>43</sup>

Michelangelo's imagination, addicted to the enigmatic, found the secrets of the Genealogy singularly rewarding to explore. The very weirdness of the subject seems to have suited his humor. To translate the verbal abstractions of a wayward theology into physiognomic images of striking vivacity, and yet let the images stand as riddles to be resolved by those acquainted with the verbal abstractions, may seem a strange game and to deserve the rebuke administered in Lodovico Dolce's *L'Aretino*: "If Michelangelo desires that his secrets be understood only by the few and learned, I must leave them alone since I do not belong to these."<sup>44</sup> However, this invective was not directed merely against an idiosyncrasy of Michelangelo, but was aimed at an accepted taste for intricate devices and labored conceits which Pietro Aretino, the flamboyant champion of a popular style, was the foremost agent in bringing out of fashion. At the time, therefore, when this particular taste for secretive imagery was still very much in vogue, the plan of Michelangelo's paintings can not have been quite as obscure as it later became. The Genealogy was a recurrent subject for sermons on the vices and virtues, and many of those who had heard such sermons could therefore decipher the program by simply looking at the figures and guessing what particular virtue or vice they were meant to represent. The more learned, on the other hand, would take pleasure in relating the pictures to the translation of the names and display their knowledge of the Bible by hitting the relevant passages.

In Michelangelo's plan, a picture of a vice appears opposite to each picture of a virtue, both of them signified by Hebrew names. The name Aminadab, for

43. This process of strenuously overcoming the vices by reproducing in oneself the *Genealogy of Christ* has a definite place in the Catholic ritual. It belongs to the period of Lent. Forty days of penitent fasting (*Quadragesima*) precede the glorious celebration of Easter. The number of these days is the same as the number of names in the Genealogy. This correspondence is the reason why in many theological treatises, among others Pagnini's *Isagoge*, some of the problems of the Genealogy are discussed under *Quadragesima*. Michelangelo himself also thought of a quadragesimal cycle, as is proved by his selection of prophets. Moreover, the story of the *Creation*, which he chose as his central theme, was a favorite subject of quadragesimal sermons because of the correspondence of Genesis with the *Liber Generationis* (see note 36). Both St. Basil's and St. Ambrose's *Hexameron* were preached during *Quadragesima*.

As the number of generations was summarized in MATTHEW I, 17 as three times fourteen, the number of names in the Genealogy was often increased from forty to forty-two by distinguishing two Jechonias and including Christ at the end, the number forty-two having also mystical advantages because it can be obtained by adding the Gospels (four) to the Decalogue (ten) and multiplying their sum by the Trinity (three). Correspondingly, the days of *Quadragesima* were also counted as forty-two, as is explained by DURANDUS, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* (1473, fol. 167r): "*Dicta est autem quadragesima, licet in ea sint quadraginta duo dies usque ad pascha . . . Sunt in ea quadraginta duo dies: quia Dominus venit ad nos per quadraginta duas (sic) generationes.*" DURANDUS concedes, however, that any debate on this difference of two days would be irrelevant: "*Ecclesia non curavit de duobus diebus quod minutias non attendit.*" The curious fact that ALBERTUS MAGNUS' *Paradisus Animae* comprises exactly forty-two virtues is probably also related to the Mystical Genealogy.

44. LODOVICO DOLCE, *L'Aretino*, in: "Quellenschriften zur Kunstgeschichte," ed. R. EITTELBERGER VON EDELBERG, 1871, II, p. 77.



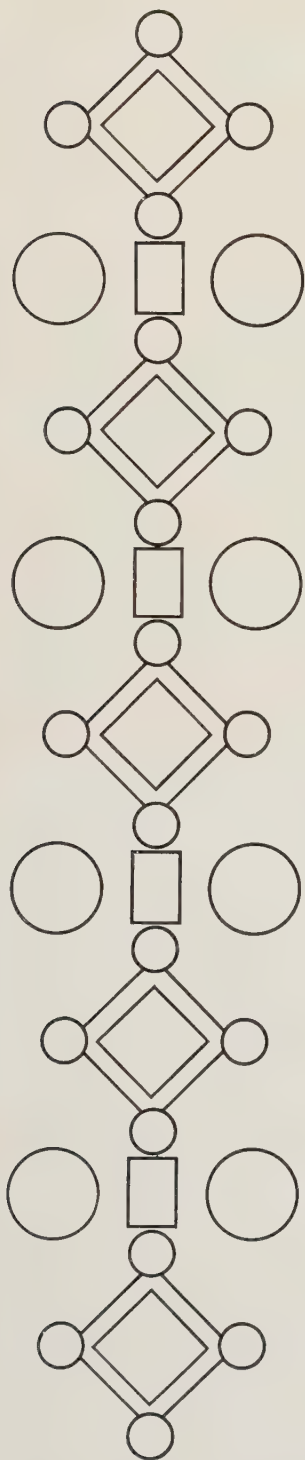


FIG. 13. — Diagram of first plan for the Sistine Ceiling.

example, with which the series begins (Fig. 1),<sup>45</sup> is joined to the picture of a young girl holding a veil on her lap and preoccupied with combing her hair, while a man, sitting motionless at her side, stares vacantly into space. Aminadab is translated as *populus meus* (my people), and these words occur in the larger passage: "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people (*populus meus*) have forgotten me days without number" (Jeremiah II, 32). The couple represent the vices of worldliness and oblivion.<sup>45A</sup>

The picture opposite shows (Fig. 2), under the name Naason (*augurium* or *enigma*), a woman looking musingly into a mirror beside a man who puzzles over a text. *Videmus nunc per speculum in enigmatē* (For now we see through a glass, darkly) (*I Corinthians XIII*, 12).<sup>46</sup> They represent the virtues of meditation and foresight.

The most startling figures are those with names which we know not only from the Genealogy according to St. Matthew, but also from the historical books of the Old Testament. Boaz, in the story of Ruth, is a generous and charitable man, but in Michelangelo's picture (Fig. 3) he appears as a mad superstitious carpenter (*Proverbs XIII*, 11-19; *Isaiah XLIV*, 13-18) engaged on a journey and talking obstinately to his own wooden image which he has carved on the head of his stick. The reason for this extraordinary behavior is that Boaz means *in quo est robur* (he in whom there is wood). He represents the vice of idolatry.

Many of Michelangelo's interpretations correspond to

45. Originally it began, of course, with Abraham; but the two first lunettes were destroyed by Michelangelo in order to make place for the *Last Judgment*.

45A. For a full statement of the vice associated with *Aminadab*, see: St. Gregory's Commentary to *Canticles VI*, 12 (*Patrologia Latina*, LXXIX, col. 532-33), where the words of the bride "*Nescivi: anima mea conturbavit me, propter quadrigas Aminadab*" are paraphrased as signifying the darkness of ignorance in the unbeliever: *Quare incredula perstiti? Cur tandiu per infidelitatem meam in tenebris ignorantiae perstiti?* *Aminadab* is here translated as *spontaneus populi mei*. In his Commentary On the First Book of Kings (*Lib. V, cap. iii*, 12; *Patrologia Latina*, LXXIX, col. 453), St. Gregory changes the translation to *urbanus*, but the moral inference remains the same: "*Aminadab interpretatur urbanus. Merito igitur, Domino consulto, repellitur: quia sancta Ecclesia ad regimen animarum non eligit negotiis saecularibus strenuum, sed spirituali conversatione decorum. Urbani quidem sunt, qui, postposita intentione coelestium, exterioribus studiis se ostendere strenuos conantur.*"

46. A literal translation of the Vulgate would be: "We see it now through a mirror as in a riddle."



FIG. 14. — Tree of Jesse, — Ceiling, St. Michael's Church, Hildesheim, Germany.

those used in contemporary sermons, but there are some striking exceptions. His picture of Jechonias (which is translated as *preparans*) illustrates the vice of *Discordia* and shows a vigorously quarrelling couple whose children play with a little stone (Figs. 4A and B). The

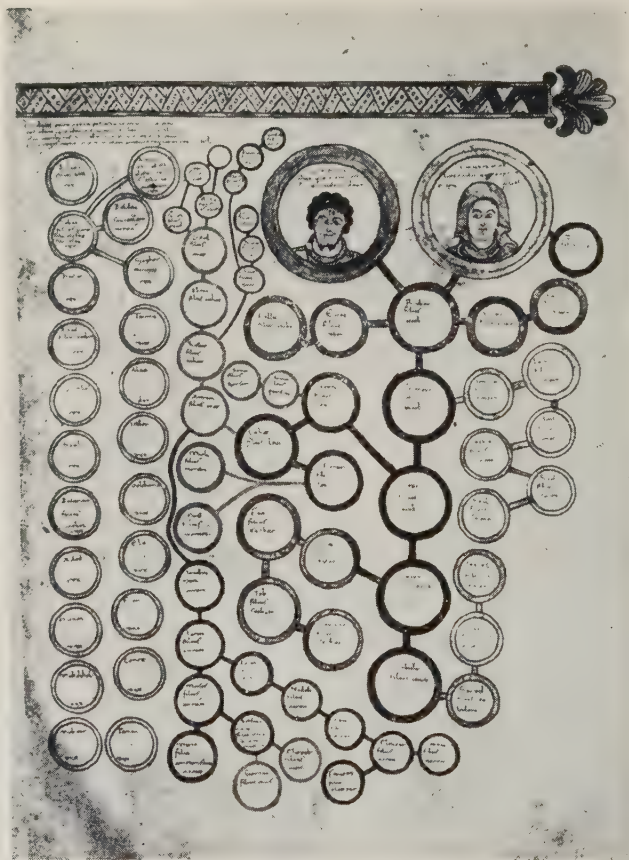


FIG. 15. — Genealogy — Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS Latin 8878.

"stone of Jechonias" as a symbol of *preparans* occurs in a rather obscure passage of St. Gregory in which he discusses this particular Ancestor of Christ,<sup>47</sup> but which does not seem

47. *Biblia Gregoriana*, 1731, *Commentaria in Novum Testamentum*, p. 3; *Patrologia Latina*, LXXVI, col. 459.



to have influenced any of the classical Renaissance sermons on the Genealogy. Now it is very unlikely that Michelangelo compiled the arguments for his pictures from a multiplicity of different books, taking the interpretation of one name from Savonarola, another from St. Antonine, a third from Pseudo-Alcuin, a fourth from St. Gregory. The more likely hypothesis is that he availed himself of the advice of an experienced theologian, particularly as his own knowledge of Latin was no greater than of Hebrew. In trying to find a contemporary theologian whose writings would combine the interpretations adopted by Michelangelo, I encountered the *Isagoge* of Sante Pagnini. This book includes not only the obscure Gregorian passage on Jechonias, but also explains, for instance, why Josaphat (whose name is translated as *ipse judicans*) is represented as writing (Fig. 5). According to Pagnini, the moralization of *ipse judicans* is to be found in Job XXXI, 35: *librum scribat ipse qui judicat* (let him who judges also write the book).

The suspicion that Pagnini may have been, if not Michelangelo's direct adviser, at least the purveyor of the theological, and particularly Hebrew, knowledge which was embodied in the program of the Sistine Ceiling, is strengthened by the history of an early *débauche* in Pagnini's ecclesiastical career. His quiet work as a Dominican friar was disrupted for a short time by a political episode. Julius II wished to make him a cardinal, but was thwarted in this attempt by the Sacred College.<sup>48</sup> The characteristic manner in which the enterprise failed, leaves no doubt that Pagnini



FIG. 16. — FRA BARTOLOMMEO. — God the Father with St. Magdalen and St. Catherine of Siena. — Pinacoteca, Lucca.

48. GUGLIELMO PAGNINO, *Vita di S. Pagnino*, 1653. On the stormy discussions attending the nomination of cardinals under Julius II, see: PASTOR, *Op. cit.*, 1901, VI, pp. 220 ff., 284 f., 343 f.

was the Pope's personal candidate.

For the theological adviser of Michelangelo to have been a Dominican friar, a disciple of Savonarola, a prior of San Marco and a *protégé* of Julius II would seem to meet the requirements of the case to perfection. *S'il n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer*. Yet the mere suggestion that such an adviser existed runs counter to an axiom of Michelangelo idolatry, to wit, that the brooding spirit of the master neither needed nor tolerated outside advice. This particular brand of amateur psychology hardly gains in authority by the ingenuous admission that Michelangelo himself fostered the legend. Nor need one insist, except for the benefit of the tender-minded, that genius is not weakened by contact with intellect, not even with the rarified and tortuous intellect of a Dominican monk skilled in Talmudic philology. On the other hand, the propounders of the autonomy of genius would presumably themselves be the last to wish that the intricacies apparent in Michelangelo's interpretation of Hebrew names had originated in his own mind.

I have chosen this subordinate problem as a test case<sup>48A</sup> because the meticulous character of the doctrine supplies decisive proof against Michelangelo's being the inventor of the program. The grander and more majestic parts of the design reveal the same mystical theology in a more generous spirit, although even here there is a degree of theological involution incompatible with what we know of Michelangelo's own erudition. His genius was aroused by the vast plan of an argument which he adopted and transfigured, but did not invent.<sup>49</sup>

48A. A complete analysis of the Sistine Ceiling will be presented in a book on *The Religious Symbolism of Michelangelo*.

49. While the literary sources for Michelangelo's representation of the Genealogy are to be found in Italian sermons and commentaries, the nearest pictorial counterparts to his genre-like portrayal of the Ancestors are the northern pictures of the *Heilige Sippe*, the most characteristic of which are contemporaneous with the Sistine Ceiling. Cranach's *Torgauer Altar* (Fig. 8) is dated 1509. In the immediate surroundings of Julius II, the apostolic protonotary Johannes Goritz (*Corycius Senex*), a native of Luxemburg, was a powerful intermediary between North and South and instituted a humanist cult of St. Anne which may have contributed to the formation of Michelangelo's images of the Genealogy. Goritz's commission, for St. Agostino in Rome, of Raphael's fresco painting of the prophet *Isaiah* with Sansovino's group of *St. Anne* placed below, the two combined by corresponding inscriptions, repeats a configuration of the Sistine Ceiling by placing the Prophet above the Genealogy. While it has always been recognized that Raphael's (badly disfigured) *Isaiah* is dependent in its design on Michelangelo's Prophets, the possibility should not be outruled that the commissions given to Michelangelo on the one hand and to Raphael and Sansovino on the other — all three of them employed at that time by Julius II — were designed to produce iconographic parallels. The apostolic protonotary, an acquaintance of Michelangelo's whom he is said to have consulted on the price to be paid for Raphael's *Isaiah*, may have deliberately repeated in his private devotion on a small scale the program which he perhaps helped devise for the monumental decoration of the papal chapel. The date 1512, engraved on Sansovino's group, supplies a *terminus ante quem* for Goritz's commission.



### *Pagnini and the Art of San Marco*

Apparently unperturbed by his political failure, Pagnini patiently remained at San Marco where he continued to administer the legacy of Savonarola. His personal interest in the visual arts is attested by the revival of the painters workshop at San Marco, which flourished under his priorship.<sup>49A</sup> In his attempt to bring back the golden age when Fra Angelico had been the friend of St. An-



FIG. 17. — FRA BARTOLOMMEO. — Madonna with St. John the Baptist and St. Stephen. Duomo, Lucca.

<sup>49A</sup>. Savonarola himself had also favored this tradition. The misconception of him as an iconoclast has been refuted by G. GRUYER, *Les Illustrations des Ecrits de Jérôme Savonarole*, 1879. For the evidence against the current misinterpretation of the "burning of the vanities," see: VILLARI, *Op. cit.*, bk. III, ch. VI.

tonine, he succeeded in a measure not generally granted to such deliberate revivals. Having persuaded Fra Bartolommeo to resume the art of painting which he had renounced after the death of Savonarola, Pagnini became the great painter's friend and guide, aiding him in all the secondary labors of his profession, from the legal technicalities of drawing up or witnessing a contract, to the inspiring advice in planning the theological design of a painting. The words "*Amor divinus ecstasim facit*" — borrowed from Dionysius the Areopagite, the favorite (though apocryphous) authority of the Renaissance for the study of mystical theology<sup>50</sup> — are inscribed on a painting which is known to have been a gift from Fra Bartolommeo to Sante Pagnini (Fig. 16).<sup>51</sup> The picture is a typical workshop product of San Marco, the upper part clumsily painted by Albertinelli, the lower with exquisite lyricism by Fra Bartolommeo. If Michelangelo's scheme for the Ancestors of Christ seemed to reflect some of the intricacies of Pagnini's erudition, Fra Bartolommeo's painting is expressive of the simple mood of Pagnini's piety. The union of the ritual and mystical life of the Church, of outward works and inward faith (poetically expressed in the parable of Rachel and Leah transmitted from Dante through Landino to Michelangelo), is pictured by Fra Bartolommeo in the eloquent contrast between two Christian saints; St. Magdalene and St. Catherine of Siena, both ecstatic lovers of Christ, but St. Magdalene expressing her love by ritual care and observance, St. Catherine (a Dominican like Pagnini himself) by a transcendent vision.

The painting belongs to the Gallery in Lucca, Pagnini's native town, to which he returned as prior of the Monastery of San Romano, serving from 1507 to 1509 and again from 1513 to 1515. Fra Bartolommeo painted, in these two periods, the *Madonna with St. John and St. Stephen* (1509) for the cathedral of Lucca (Fig. 17), and the famous *Madonna della Misericordia* (1515) for San Romano, Pagnini's monastery (Fig. 18).<sup>52</sup> Both these works — perhaps to the discomfiture of those who have a rigid view of what Savonarola signified — are instinct with reminiscences of Venetian painting.<sup>53</sup> The wide range of Fra Bartolommeo's artistic sympathies permitted him to fuse such influences, without loss of character, with those he generously received and acknowledged from both Leonardo and Raphael, and also from Michelangelo (with whom he seems to have had a common friend in that strange dabbler, Bugiardini).<sup>54</sup> He even competed with Michelangelo in painting a *Madonna Doni* (Fig. 20),<sup>55</sup> a sur-

50. PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS AREOPAGITA, *De Divinis Nominibus*, IV, 13 (*Patrologia Graeca*, II, col. 437).

51. HANS VON DER GABELENTZ, *Fra Bartolommeo*, 1922, I, p. 148. There is no reason to accept the conjecture that this particular picture was originally intended for Venice.

52. *Ibid.*, I, pp. 146f., 170ff.

53. Fra Bartolommeo had visited Venice in 1508.

54. In his figure of *St. Mark* (Fig. 19), Fra Bartolommeo managed to blend the style of the Prophets of the Sistine Ceiling with an archaic restraint that resembles a medieval illumination.

55. The painting, in the Galleria Corsini in Rome, is dated 1516 (V.D. GABELENTZ, *Op. cit.*, p. 180).



prisingly fresh composition, which he managed to extract with superb eclecticism from Leonardo's *St. Anne*, Michelangelo's Taddei tondo, and Raphael's *Madonna Alba*.

However, the most significant link between Michelangelo and Fra Bartolommeo was their employment by the *gonfaloniere* Soderini for the decoration of the *Sala del Gran Consiglio*, at a time when Soderini attempted a new *rapprochement* between San Marco and the Florentine Government, and Pagnini was prior of San Marco.



FIG. 18. — FRA BARTOLOMMEO. — Mater Misericordiae. — Pinacoteca, Lucca.

### *Soderini as a Disciple of Savonarola*

After the execution of Savonarola in 1498, the Monastery of San Marco had been exposed to severe indignities. *La piagnona*, the famous bell which had become the symbol of Savonarola's party, was exiled for fifty years "under pain

of anyone who should bring it back being declared a rebel."<sup>56</sup> But when Piero Soderini was elected *gonfaloniere* for life in 1502, he decided to depend for his support on the popular assembly created by Savonarola. He had been a par-

56. LUCA LANDUCCI, *A Florentine Diary from 1450 to 1516*, ed. A. DE R. JERVIS, 1927, p. 234, note 1.

tisan of the Friar from the beginning. As early as 1494, he is recorded as a member of the Florentine deputation to Charles VIII, in which Savonarola first exhibited his political acumen.<sup>57</sup> And by the time Savonarola was arrested and tried, the Soderinis were so well known as his sympathizers that Paolo Antonio Soderini, Piero's brother, fled for his life to Lucca.<sup>58</sup> That four years after Savonarola's death, a Soderini could be elected *gonfaloniere* for life, shows how quickly popular favor had returned to the *piagnoni*. Within a few years he managed to have the decree against the monastery annulled: the bell was returned in 1509. On this occasion Soderini received the gift of two paintings which are listed in a touching entry in the books of Fra Bartolommeo's workshop:

"*Item: two panels, of one cubit each, the one representing the head of Christ, the other the Virgin, valued at 14 ducats, given to Piero Soderini when he was gonfaloniere, at the time when the bell was returned.*"<sup>59</sup>

Soderini's care was at once directed to the embellishment of the *Sala del Gran Consiglio*, the Great Assembly Hall built at Savonarola's advice. The Hall was to be decorated by the great battle frescoes of Leonardo and Michelangelo, while an enormous altar panel, which had been originally ordered from Filippino Lippi and entrusted after the latter's death to Fra Bartolommeo, was to represent — in the words of Vasari — "all the protecting saints of the city of Florence and those saints on whose days the city won its victories."<sup>60</sup> The idea of a militant theocracy, conceived in accordance with the spirit of Savonarola, pervades the pro-

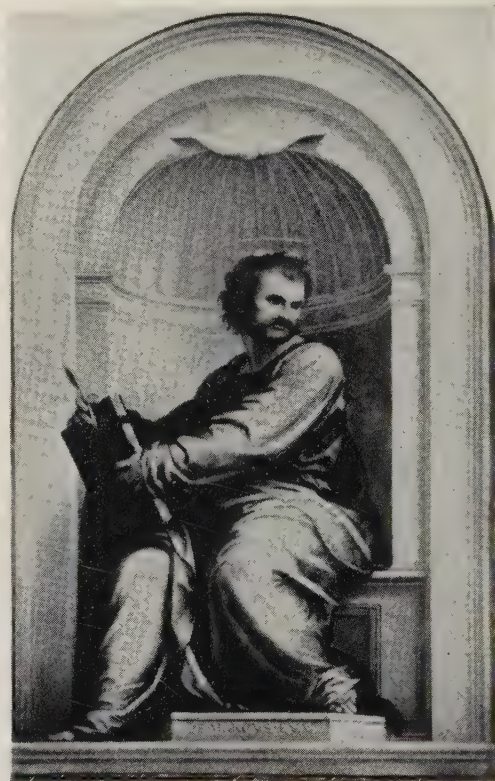


FIG. 19. — FRA BARTOLOMMEO. — St. Mark. — Palazzo Pitti, Florence.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 60: Nov. 5, 1494. I quote this source with some hesitation, for the list of the embassy given by VILLARI, *Op. cit.*, p. 218, shows Piero Capponi in place of Piero Soderini. I have not been able to determine which of the two versions is correct. The best account I found of Soderini is in the well-documented book: GABRIEL THOMAS, *Les Révolutions Politiques de Florence (1177-1530), Etude sur leur Causes et leur Enchaînement*, Paris, 1887. The contemporary biography: GIROLAMO RAZZI, *Vita di Pietro Soderini*, was not accessible to me.

58. Paolo Antonio Soderini was Florentine Ambassador to Venice when the Medici fled from Florence in 1494. By declaring at once in favor of the new government he forestalled any political moves by Piero de' Medici on the latter's arrival in Venice. The institution of the Grand Council in Florence on the Venetian model was largely due to his initiative.

59. MARCHESI, *Op. cit.*, II, p. 145 (list of paintings disposed of without payment, drawn up in 1516).

60. VASARI, *Life of Fra Bartolommeo*. The "prior" repeatedly mentioned in this *Life* is Sante Pagnini.





FIG. 20. — FRA BARTOLOMMEO. — Madonna Doni. — Galleria Corsini, Rome.

battles have this in common, that the Florentines were unprepared for the combat and taken by surprise, so that their victories could fittingly be commemorated as

61. The religious connotation of the battle pieces is confirmed by the written draft for the Battle of Anghiari in the *Codice Atlantico* (no. 669 in *The Literary Works of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. JEAN PAUL RICHTER AND IRMA RICHTER, 1939, I, p. 381f.) which describes the patriarch of Aquileja conversing before the beginning of the battle with St. Peter who appears in a cloud. The battle of Anghiari was fought on the day of SS. Peter and Paul. It is baffling, however, that SS. Peter and Paul do not appear in Fra Bartolommeo's altarpiece for the *Sala del Gran Consiglio*. Nor can any of the saints in this painting be identified for certain with St. Victor, on whose day the Battle of Cascina was fought. Equally striking is the absence of St. George, who is so conspicuous — together with SS. Peter and Paul — in Fra Bartolommeo's related painting of a later date (Fig. 22), and the subordinate representation of the Baptist as a *Giovannino*. Presumably all these saints were to be represented more prominently in separate panels or frescoes, forming counterparts to the battle scenes with which the saints were to be associated as protectors. See below, notes 62-63.

62. Cf. a sheet of drawings by a follower of Michelangelo (Fig. 21), showing a paraphrase of the battle cartoon, next to a sketch of an architectural setting with pictures of *St. George fighting the Dragon* and a *Baptism*. These are explicitly inscribed *San Giorgio* and *San Giovanni*. As all the sketches on this sheet are certainly made by one hand and at one time, it is at least permissible to assume a connection between them. MR. POPHAM, who has recently recognized in this drawing the hand of Perino del Vaga ("The Burlington Magazine," 1945, pp. 85 ff.), proposes that the architectural sketch and the inserted scenes refer to the chapel of St. George and St. John the Baptist in Pisa, for which Perino was temporarily engaged in planning the decorations. This would still leave the connection with the battle piece accidental. I would rather suspect that the architectural sketch is a reminiscence of the east wall of the *Sala del Consiglio*, the window being the one just left of the *loggia* of the *gonfaloniere* and the *signori*. In that case, the sketch would suggest a few emendations to the excellent reconstruction of the *Sala* by J. WILDE ("Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes," VII, 1944, published in 1946, pp. 65ff.), in which only the spacing and design of the windows and doors along the east and west walls (and, consequently, the placing of the two main frescoes) might allow for alternative suggestions. As the present article went to press in 1945, it was written without knowledge of MR. WILDE's observations on the *Sala*, with which it is widely in agreement.

gram of all these paintings.<sup>61</sup> To be fully understood, the plan needs to be interpreted as a unity; for the extraordinary juxtaposition of a battle of riders in Leonardo to a battle of bathers in Michelangelo (the latter a singularly far-fetched choice and without precedent in secular battle pieces), makes sense only if one takes into account that these exhibitions of the republic's militant spirit were to be seen in a religious setting, thus finding their counterparts in paintings glorifying St. George as a saint of riders, and St. John the Baptist as a saint of bathers.<sup>62</sup> The accounts of both

miraculous salvations of the Florentine people by the intercession of their favorite saints.<sup>63</sup> As late as the XVII Century, the Battle of Anghiari retained such strong religious connotations that it acquired a new patron saint in St. Andrea Corsini, on whose tomb in Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence the Battle is engraved in relief.<sup>64</sup>

Machiavelli, who served as Secretary under Soderini, must have contemplated with mixed feelings the paintings planned for the decoration of the *Sala*. As a determined advocate of a popular militia, he disapproved of battles fought by mercenary troops, and in his *History of Florence* he reduced the supposedly glorious Battle of Anghiari to the level of a contemptible skirmish.<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, the plan of increasing patriotic fervor by an injection of religious awe was completely in accordance with his own principles. Five chapters of Machiavelli's *Discourses* (I:11-15) are dedicated to the importance of supernatural beliefs to the safety of a republic. His personal scepticism notwithstanding, he emphatically recommends the fostering of religion, independently of the question of its truth: "And therefore everything that tends to favor religion (even though it were believed to be false) should be received and availed of to strengthen it . . . Such was, in fact, the practise observed by sagacious men; which has given rise to the belief in the miracles that are celebrated in religions, however false they may be."<sup>66</sup> He admits that superstitious worship is easier to induce in primitive people ("simple mountaineers") than in "such as are accustomed to live in cities, where civilization is already corrupt; *as a sculptor finds it easier to make a fine statue out of a crude block of marble than out of a statue badly begun by another.*"<sup>67</sup> This is clearly an allusion to Michelangelo's statue of David, which was carved from a mutilated block and placed at the entrance of the Palazzo Vecchio under the personal auspices of Sod-

63. St. John the Baptist is placed next to St. Victor in Filippino's altarpiece for the old *Sala del Consiglio* (cf. K. B. NEILSON, *Filippino Lippi*, 1938, p. 61). A possible relation of St. George to the Battle of Anghiari is suggested by Leonardo's own sketches for both subjects in Windsor.

64. For other representations of the Battle of Anghiari as a saintly battle associated with the cult of St. Andrea Corsini, see: MÂLE, *L'Art Religieux après le Concile de Trente*, 1932, p. 453.

65. ". . . only one man died, and he, not from wounds inflicted by hostile weapons, or any honorable means, but having fallen from his horse, was trampled to death . . . It is astonishing that an army so constructed should have sufficient energy to obtain the victory, or that any should be found so imbecile as to allow such a disorderly rabble to vanquish them . . ." (*History of Florence*, ed. C. W. COLBY, 1901, bk. V, ch. VII). The incompatibility of this passage with the draft in the *Codice Atlantico* (" . . . and then began a great slaughter," etc.) makes it certain that SOLMI was mistaken in claiming that Leonardo's *Battle of Anghiari* was based on a text supplied by Machiavelli. SOLMI's assumption that the draft in the *Codice Atlantico* was written in Machiavelli's hand is now generally rejected. Cf. J. P. RICHTER AND I. A. RICHTER, *Op. cit.*, I, p. 381; KENNETH CLARK, *Leonardo da Vinci*, 1939, p. 134.

66. Convinced as he was of the reality of evil and of the chaotic force in human passions, he persuaded himself, to the point of desperation, that the "disregard of divine institutions" produces the ruin of republics: "*for where the fear of God is wanting, there the country will come to ruin, unless it be sustained by the fear of the prince, which may temporarily supply the want of religion*" (italics mine). "But as the lives of princes are short, the kingdom will of necessity perish. . . ."

67. Italics mine.



erini.<sup>68</sup> In reminding his compatriots that the task of perfecting a misshapen form had been successfully accomplished in Florentine art, Machiavelli concludes that this could equally well be performed in Florentine statesmanship, as is proved by the example of Savonarola: "And although untutored and ignorant men are more easily persuaded . . . yet that does not make it impossible to persuade civilized men who claim to be enlightened. The people of Florence are far from considering themselves ignorant and benighted, and yet Brother Giorolamo Savonarola succeeded in persuading them that he held converse with God. I will not pretend to judge whether it was true or not, for we must speak with all respect of so great a man; but I may well say that an immense number believed it . . . Let no one, then, fear not to be able to accomplish what others have done."

Soderini's own approach to the problem of religion and statesmanship was free of Machiavelli's acid scepticism and of its inevitable counterpart — his belief in violence. The lessons of Savonarola were accepted by Soderini with that untroubled *naïveté* which exasperated Machiavelli in his superior. As he reproached Soderini in his *Discourses* for not having faced the fact that to preserve a republic, it is necessary to "slay the sons of Brutus,"<sup>69</sup> so he expressed his impatience in a more light-hearted and flippant mood when he wrote an imaginary epitaph for Soderini, which says that when Soderini tried to get into Hell, he was refused because he belonged in the limbo of the babies.<sup>70</sup> That these two men, with their incompatible views of human nature, should have collaborated in re-aligning San Marco with the Florentine government, in no way softens the conflict between their opinions: the one regarded as a solemn truth what the other recommended as expedient.

The result was a renewed alliance of statesmanship and religion. While the setting of the *Sala del Gran Consiglio* was to instill a religious spirit into the patriotic emotions of the Florentines, the converse effect can be observed in the religious art of San Marco which becomes progressively militant. When Fra Bartolommeo first painted the *Marriage of St. Catherine* (Fig. 23) for the monastery, he endowed it with some of that lyrical quality which characterized the earlier picture of *St. Catherine and St. Magdalene* (Fig. 16). But when the city bought the picture at Soderini's advice in order to present it as a gift to the French ambassador, Fra Bartolommeo produced for San Marco a second version (Fig. 22) in which the predominance of martial saints, particularly St. George

68. This is inadvertently attested by VASARI (*Life of Michelangelo*) who, as a servile courtier of Duke Cosimo I, is anxious to ridicule the republican Soderini in the supposedly ill-suited role of a patron.

69. MACHIAVELLI, *Discourses*, III, 3.

70. PASQUALE VILLARI, *Life and Times of Machiavelli*, London, 4th impression (n.d.), II, p. 35. The imaginary epitaph is such a common satirical device and has been used so effectively in all ages — cf. the famous epitaph of Pietro Aretino or Oliver Goldsmith's *Retaliation* — that it is difficult to understand why MACHIAVELLI'S little ditty rhyming *Soderini* with *bambini* is being mistaken for a brutal invective against a dead man. Surely, he wrote it while Soderini was alive.

with his magnificent flag, gives to the *Santa Conversazione* the force of a military demonstration. Painted during Pagnini's priorship and at the height of Soderini's attempt at a politico-religious revival, this painting is perhaps our most eloquent document for the combination of a religious with a militant spirit, by which the successors of Savonarola reasserted their faith in his example.

Compared with the *élan* of this painting, there is almost an air of timidity in the slightly earlier design of the unwieldy *grisaille* (perhaps not by Fra Bartolommeo's own hand, but a workshop underpainting)<sup>71</sup> which is all that was carried out of the large altarpiece for the *Sala del Gran Consiglio* (Fig. 24). With the return of the Medici in 1512, preceded by the expulsion of Soderini, the institution of the Grand Council was abolished and the Great Hall cut up into small chambers for the use of guards. "At this time it was the pleasure of the new government," writes the diarist Landucci, a devout believer in Savonarola, "to spoil the hall of the Great Council, that is, the woodwork and all the beautiful things that had been made at a great cost, and so many beautiful hangings; and they built certain little rooms for the soldiers, making an entrance from the hall; which was a grief to the whole of Florence . . ."<sup>72</sup>

But the Medici were far too sagacious and resourceful to declare themselves outright enemies of the popular government which they supplanted. Since their expulsion had been due to the autocratic pretensions of Piero di Lorenzo, whose folly was proverbial in the family, and in no way shared or enjoyed by either Giovanni (later Leo X), or Giuliano (later Duke of Ne-

71. Cf. BERENSON, *The Drawings of the Florentine painters*, 1938, I, p. 160.

72. LANDUCCI, *Op. cit.*, p. 264: December 12th, 1512.



FIG. 21. — PERINO DEL VAGA (?). — Sketch after the *Battle of Cascina*. — Albertina, Vienna.



mours), or Giulio (later Clement VII), they had no inclination to repeat an error of which they had been the victims rather than the authors.<sup>73</sup> Savonarola's constitution of Florence, while suspended for the time being, was treated by them as one of several possible alternatives of republican government on which they invited learned debate and dispassionate inquiry. By ostensibly seeking the recommendations of scholars and statesmen for a reasonable solution of the constitutional problem, it is certain that they shrewdly played for time, but they perhaps also hoped that in these discussions a "mixed" form of government might be defined which would secure their prerogative within a republican constitution. In this atmosphere of political suspense and intellectual inquiry, Machiavelli, though once employed as secretary under Soderini and temporarily suspected of participation in the conspiracy of Boscoli, produced his reflections on the possible remedies for a body politic that is ailing, and he also wrote at the explicit order of Cardinal Giulio de' Medici (Clement VII) his analytical history of Florence; while Giorolamo Benivieni, renowned as one of the early converts of Savonarola, addressed to the same Clem-

73. Such completely different observers as the devout LANDUCCI and the analytical MACHIAVELLI agree in regarding Giovanni de' Medici (Leo X) as a persistent friend of the republican constitution. Nothing to the contrary was ever asserted of Giuliano, Duke of Nemours, who seems to have regarded his role merely as that of an intermediary regent. As for Giulio de' Medici (later Clement VII), MACHIAVELLI concedes in his *Discourse upon Reforming the Government of Florence* that he is best qualified to inform Leo X of the nature of the problem; which implies that MACHIAVELLI did not regard him as *a priori* averse to his recommendation of a republican constitution. The only exception to the rule is Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, who followed in the footsteps of his father, Piero. Clement's attitude seems to have changed only after 1527. Cf. F. GILBERT, *Alcuni Discorsi di Uomini Politici Fiorentini e la Politica di Clemente VII per la Restaurazione Medicea*, in: "Archivio Storico Italiano," II, 1935, pp. 1-24.



FIG. 22. — FRA BARTOLOMMEO. — Marriage of St. Catherine. — Uffizi, Florence.

ent VII an *Epistola*<sup>74</sup> defending Savonarola's doctrines and prophecies.<sup>75</sup>

In these circumstances it should not be a matter of too great surprise that Pagnini, as a disciple of Savonarola, proved acceptable to the Medici. They had been returned to power with the help of Julius II who, exasperated by the refusal of the Soderini government to join the Holy League, had forced Soderini out of office. Julius II was Pagnini's old patron, but no intercession on his part was required to recommend Pagnini to the Medici; for he was prior of the monastery which Cosimo de' Medici had founded. Moreover, Savonarola himself had owed his continued presence in Florence to the good offices of Lorenzo de' Medici by whom he had been recalled at the entreaties of Pico della Mirandola, and permanently settled at San Marco.<sup>76</sup>

The continued security of Pagnini has its parallel in the large freedom granted to Michelangelo who, to the bewilderment of his biographers, was persistently employed by the Medici although they knew him to be a *popolano*. However, it was an established tradition of Medici policy to be wary of the patricians but not of the people, and this principle, eloquently defended by Machiavelli,<sup>77</sup> can be traced, with the exception of the short and untypical interludes of Piero di Lorenzo and his son, the Duke of Urbino, through the entire history of the Medici rule from the time of Cosimo down to the year 1527, when the exploitation by the *popolani* of the *sacco di Roma* broke this link beyond repair.

Unlike Michelangelo, Pagnini did not take part in the final struggle and confusion. Leo X had called him to Rome to join a newly founded school of oriental studies.<sup>78</sup> In 1522, anticipating by a few years the voluntary exile of many Italian patriots, he went to France where he helped to reduce the growing influence of the Lutherans and Waldensians. The mystical stamp of his thought, akin to certain phases of Protestant piety, may have given him greater powers of persuasion in returning the erring sheep to the fold. Like Vittoria Colonna, whose friendship

74. Cf. VILLARI, *Savonarola*, *Op. cit.*, p. 79, n. 2. The *Epistola* was published by MILANESI in the appendix of his edition of BENEDETTO VARCHI's *Florentine History*.

75. MACHIAVELLI himself, in his *Discourse upon Reforming the Government of Florence*, written for Leo X after the death of the Duke of Urbino, very insistently advises the pope to reopen the Hall of the Grand Council: "Without satisfying the generality, no Republic ever yet stood upon a stable foundation; and it is certain the generality of Florence will never be satisfied, except the *Hall of a Thousand* be opened again, and the distribution of offices restored to it . . . Your Holiness should likewise be further informed, that whoever meditates any revolution in the State will certainly endeavor above all things, in the first place, to open that Hall again: and therefore it must surely be the best way to do it yourself . . ." (*The Works of Nicholas Machiavel*, translated by ELLIS FARNEWORTH, 1762, II, p. 190).

76. VILLARI, *Op. cit.*, p. 88, n. 1, gives the full documentary evidence, including Lorenzo de' Medici's own memorandum under the date of April 29th, 1489. Moreover, when the Medici fled in 1494, San Marco was the place of refuge in which they deposited whatever was left of their treasures (*ibid.*, p. 224).

77. *Discourses*, bk. I, ch. 5, 29, 58, 59.

78. WILLIAM ROSCOE, *The Life and Pontificate of Leo X*, 1893, I, pp. 358 ff.



with Ochino before he turned Protestant<sup>78A</sup> might have rendered her suspect in the eyes of the orthodox, he proved more valiant and unimpeachable than those who had never lived so near the border.

### *Pagnini in France*

Pagnini went first to Avignon and then settled with the Dominicans in Lyon, where he died in 1536.<sup>79</sup> In his last years he enjoyed the friendship of the Lyonese physician Symphorien Champier, a Paracelsian character, who based his most innocent claim to fame on being related by marriage to Bayard, the *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche*, whose genealogy he compiled.<sup>80</sup> His writings include a *Symphonia Platonis cum Aristotele et Galeni cum Hippocrate*,<sup>81</sup> which suggests that the theme of *Pic de la Mirandole en France* might be extended to the history

78A. Cf. ROLAND H. BAINTON, *Bernardino Ochino*, 1940, pp. 22-38.

79. Cf. COLONIA, *Op. cit.*, 1730, II, p. 598: "L'époque de la mort de ce scavant Auteur est devenue une espèce de petit problème littéraire." His tomb, in the *Eglise des Jacobins de Lyon*, was transferred from the choir to the nave; at which occasion the inscription was renewed and the date mistakenly changed from 1536 to 1541. The misreading of XXXVI for XXXXI is a typical epigraphic error. Almost all reference books, trusting the inscription of the tomb, give the wrong date. Decisive proof for the earlier date is supplied by *Joannis Vultei Remensis Epigrammatum Libri Quattuor*, which, printed in Lyon in 1537, contains Pagnini's epitaph. Moreover, Leandro Alberti, "homme exact à marquer les dates des évènements," asserts that Pagnini died in Lyon in 1536: "Passò di questa mortal vita tanto huomo in Lione di Francia nell' anno 1536." (*Descrittione di Tutta Italia*, 1551, p. 34).

80. *Les Gestes Ensemble la Vie du Preulx Chevalier Bayard; avec sa Généalogie*, 1525. On Champier see: P. ALLUT, *Etude Biographique et Bibliographique sur Symphorien Champier*, Lyon, 1859. FIRMIN DIDOT's *Biographie Universelle* of 1854 misprints, in an otherwise excellent article, the date of Champier's death as 1533 (presumably for 1538, since the last recorded events of his life are in 1537; see ALLUT, *Op. cit.*, p. 46).

81. Paris, 1516.



FIG. 23. — FRA BARTOLOMMEO. — Marriage of St. Catherine. — Louvre, Paris.

No trace is left, so far as I know, of any correspondence between Pagnini and Michelangelo. It is not impossible that something may yet emerge from the hidden recesses of the *Archivio Buonarroti*. But even at its best, Michelangelo's correspondence is so scanty in content and disgruntled in tone, that it has proved more rewarding for a history of his legal and family quarrels than for a study of the genesis of his frescoes.

Pagnini's own correspondence has never been collected, and it is doubtful whether much of it survives. His unpublished writings, which were voluminous, were left by him to the Dominican library in Lyon. Only a fraction of them was incorporated in Champier's posthumous edition of the *Isagoge* and in Serveto's version of Pagnini's *Bible*. The rest was seen in Lyon as late as the mid-XVIII Century<sup>82</sup> but presumably perished when the Dominican library was sacked in

of medicine. His vast erudition and unbounded curiosity, to which we owe his ambitious collections of historical, genealogical and apocryphous lore, would have made him an ideal editor of Pagnini's literary remains. His *Nef des Femmes Vertueuses* has a chapter on the prophecies of the sibyls. But the *Isagoge* with the *Seventen Books of Mystical Interpretations* was all that he ever attempted.

The association of Pagnini with Symphorien Champier belongs with his friendship for Fra Bartolommeo among the very few personal records of Pagnini's life which have become accessible.

82. TOURON, *Op. cit.*, 1747, IV, p. 92.



the French Revolution.<sup>83</sup>

We are therefore forced to base our judgment on such circumstantial evidence as I have tried to present in this essay. Pagnini was a disciple of Savonarola, of whom Michelangelo was a follower in his youth. He was prior of San Marco at a time when Michelangelo worked in Florence. Under his priorship San Marco cooperated with the *gonfaloniere* Soderini, who was Michelangelo's patron. And when Michelangelo left Florence for Rome, it was in order to enter the employment of the very pope who wished to make Pagnini a cardinal. The least that can be claimed on the basis of these coincidences is that the theological works of Pagnini are worth consulting for the iconography of the Sistine Ceiling.

83. LEOPOLD NIEPCE (*Les Bibliothèques Anciennes et Modernes de Lyon*, 1876, pp. 126 ff.) gives a detailed account of how the contents of the Dominican Library were transferred during the Revolution to the *Maison Pierre* (*Abbaye de Saint Pierre*) which became the general deposit of the sequestered libraries. The building served as "*la principale caserne des muscadins*" during the siege and was repeatedly bombarded. "*Pendant le siège, la bombe a éclaté, à diverses reprises, au dépôt.*" Some of the books and manuscripts were destroyed in the fire, others exposed to rain because of the damaged roof, others removed by revolutionaries who objected to their being written by "religious fanatics." The degree of destruction is described in an official report dated "*5 fructidor de l'an II*" (reprinted by NIEPCE, p. 128). Whatever remained became part of the Library of Lyon. In 1812, the librarian Antoine François Delandine published in three volumes a catalogue of the manuscripts: *Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Lyon; ou notices sur leur ancienneté . . . , précédées d'une histoire des anciennes bibliothèques de Lyon*. On p. 28 of vol. I, he discusses "*celle des Dominicains fondée par le savant Santes Pagnini*," but the catalogue which follows, lists no manuscripts by Pagnini. It is difficult to say whether it is due more to the revolutionaries or to the Counter-reformers that some of PAGNINI's printed books are equally difficult to trace. I have not been able to consult, for instance, his *Catena Argentea in Pentateuchum*, Lyon, 1536, 6 vols.



FIG. 24. — FRA BARTOLOMMEO. — St. Anne with the Saints of Florence. — St. Marco, Florence.

Pagnini continued the tradition of mystical theology which had prevailed in Florence since the time of St. Antonine. Savonarola had been its most spectacular exponent because he had grafted political prophecies onto his mystical reading of the Scriptures. With Pagnini, biblical mysticism was supported by Hebrew philology.<sup>84</sup> Endowed with administrative abilities not unworthy of a successor of St. Antonine, he revived the tradition of painting at San Marco and became the guiding force in Fra Bartolommeo's career. Affinities in the religious symbolism of Michelangelo and Fra Bartolommeo might not be regarded as conclusive evidence to claim Pagnini as their common denominator. In any case, Pagnini's biography sufficiently disposes of the legend that at the time when Julius II employed Michelangelo and Raphael to paint theological frescoes in the Vatican, theological learning had gone out of fashion.

An XVIII Century visitor to the *Biblioteca Casanatense* in Rome, discovered a little book on which he thought it worth writing an essay. This was the unique copy, since lost, of a *Commentary on the Psalms* written by Sante Pagnini.<sup>85</sup> The author wondered why only a single copy of the book had survived. His suspicion that this Commentary may have displeased the Inquisition — not unnatural in view of the association of Pagnini and Serveto — would probably have been strengthened if he could have known that the last copy would also vanish. This copy came from the library of Contarini; which suggests that Pagnini was read in the theological circle of Contarini and Pole, frequented by Michelangelo in his old age, and generally associated with the name of Vittoria Colonna.

June, 1945.

EDGAR WIND.



84. Michelangelo's spelling of Hebrew names shows an interesting deviation from Pagnini's method. While Michelangelo preferred the Greek forms in accordance with humanist taste (*Hieremias*, *Esaïas*), Pagnini was anxious to restore the correct Hebrew pronunciation and advocated such deliberate barbarisms as *Jesahiahu* (for Isaiah), *Irmeiahu* (for Jeremiah), and *Jechezechel* (for Ezekiel).

85. A. CALOGIERÀ, "De S. Pagnini libri commentariorum in Psalmos dissertatio," in "Nuova Raccolta d'Opuscoli . . .," XXXI, 1755 etc.





# A NOTE ON TWO PICTURES

BY

# TINTORETTO

*Ut queant laxis resonare fibris mira gestorum famuli tuorum  
solve polluti labii reatum, sancte Johannes.*

(PAULUS DIACONUS)

**T**INTORETTO'S *Nativity of St. John the Baptist* in S. Zaccaria in Venice and its free replica in the Hermitage (Fig. 1)<sup>1</sup> have not been so badly misunderstood as the *Miracle of St. Augustine* in Vicenza, the meaning of

1. E. VON DER BERCKEN AND A. L. MAYER, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, Munich, 1923, pp. 187, 267; *La Mostra del Tintoretto; Catalogo delle Opere*, Venice, Cà Pesaro, 1937, no. 4 (good reproductions of the picture in S. ZACCARIA); D.V.HADELN, in: "The Burlington Magazine," XLIII, 1923, pp. 286 ff., pl. I, II.

which I recently tried to clarify.<sup>2</sup> On the contrary, Mrs. Jameson, in a hitherto over-looked passage of one of her books on sacred art, gave the correct interpretation of the Leningrad picture;<sup>3</sup> and later, Detlev v. Hadeln, in a side-remark, pleaded against the mislabeling of both works.<sup>4</sup> Yet the documentation for the correct interpretation has never, to my knowledge, been gathered.

The problem is this: representations of the Birth of the Virgin and of that of St. John, may, at times, look almost exactly alike. This is the case, if the scene of the Birth of St. John does not include the episode of Zacharias naming his belated offspring.<sup>5</sup> In such instance the father of St. John indulges in vague gestures, like Joachim at the birth of his daughter Mary. The two elderly mothers can not be told apart, the sex of the child can not be ascertained, and in both scenes the same bustle of maids and visitors goes on. From early times, artists made much of the bathing of the two children. Some must have thought it better suited for the representation of the Birth of St. John than the naming of the boy, which according to the Scriptures did not take place until a week after his birth.<sup>6</sup> Tintoretto's two pictures are of this type. Thus it is no wonder that they are described sometimes as the Birth of the Virgin and sometimes as that of St. John.

Both are obviously isolated pictures, and one can not expect to find companion pieces from the same series to throw light on them; so the clues to an interpretation can only be gathered from examination of the pictures themselves and of their milieu. Hadeln quoted external evidence to prove that the canvas in S. Zaccaria represents the *Birth of St. John*. It hangs in a church dedicated to St. John's father. This in itself would not be conclusive proof, considering the common occurrence everywhere of scenes from the life of the Virgin and of St. Anne. Corroboration comes from XVI Century sources, which describe the picture as the *Birth of St. John*.<sup>7</sup> This tradition which dates back to the lifetime of the artist, should be accepted as sound.

2. "The Art Bulletin," XVI, 1944, pp. 195 f.

3. MRS. JAMESON, *The History of Our Lord* (continued and completed by LADY EASTLAKE), 2nd ed., London, 1865, vol. I, p. 290. The picture here is described as in the Crozat Collection, from which it came to the Hermitage. Before, it was in the Collection of Cardinal Mazarin.

4. *Op. cit.*, p. 286, editor's note. HADELN considers the picture in the Hermitage a school replica. This problem is outside the scope of our study. For further information about it see: HENRY REITLINGER, *Old Master Drawings*, London, 1922, p. 114, pl. 5; and HANS TIETZE and ERIKA TIETZE-CONRAT, *The Drawings of the Venetian Painters*, New York, 1944, pp. 274, 296, no. 1846.

5. Luke I, 59-64.

6. Ghirlandaio in his fresco cycle in S. Maria Novella assigned a separate fresco to the episode of the name-giving. The Salimbeni brothers, in St. Giovanni in Urbino, give the episode twice: it occurs as a separate scene; but in the *Nativity of St. John* we see Zacharias, seated on the bed of Elizabeth, writing. It looks as if the painters had mixed two different prototypes, while planning their unusually detailed fresco cycle. See: R. VAN MARLE, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, vol. VIII, The Hague, 1927, figs. 126-131, where the fresco containing the naming is unfortunately omitted. This is reproduced by COLASANTI, in: "Bollettino d'Arte," IV, 1910, p. 414.

7. FRANCESCO SANSOVINO, *Venetia Città Nobilissima* (1581), ed. MARTINONI, Venice, 1613, p. 84; RAFFAELLO BORGHINI, *Il Riposo* (1584), Florence, 1730, p. 452.





FIG. 1. — Tintoretto. — Nativity of St. John the Baptist. — Hermitage, Leningrad.

It is fortunate that the subject of this picture seems identified, beyond reasonable doubt, by such evidence, because the representation itself does not yield any clue. It would, however, be hazardous, on this basis, to claim the same interpretation for the Leningrad picture. A sense of economy, not foreign to Renaissance artists,<sup>8</sup> might have induced Tintoretto to re-use the composition for the *Birth of the Virgin* which it could as well describe. In fact, E. von der Bercken and A. L. Mayer list the picture as such; and others have even attempted to identify it with a picture of this subject by Tintoretto which was in the Scuola della Misericordia (*dei Mercatanti*) in Venice, and which is now lost.<sup>9</sup> Yet one detail of the Hermitage picture excludes these conjectures: the halo around the head of the woman who holds the infant in her lap. For Mrs. Jameson this halo identifies her as the

8. Tintoretto himself, for instance, was in the habit of using certain figure studies time and again in different contexts.

9. Cf. MARTINONI, in: FRANCESCO SANSOVINO, *Op. cit.*, p. 167; Cf. LIONELLO VENTURI, in: "L'Arte" XV, 1912, p. 209, and a note by D.V. HADELN, in his edition of CARLO RIDOLFI, *Le Maraviglie dell' Arte*, vol. II, Berlin, 1924, p. 64 note 4. HADELN opposed the identification on the grounds that the picture does not have the right format.

Virgin Mary whom legend holds to have been present at the Birth of St. John.<sup>10</sup> No woman entitled to this distinction could have assisted at the Birth of the Virgin.

Representations of the *Birth of St. John* with this feature are very rare; the legends on which they are based are little known; and nearly all books on iconography are wrapped in complete silence on this point. Mrs. Jameson explains that the Virgin may appear in two poses, either nursing the child, as in Tintoretto's picture, or presenting it to Zacharias who writes down his name. The second version, examples of which are found in Roger van der Weyden's *Altar of St. John* in Berlin, and on Andrea Pisano's door of the Florentine Baptistry,<sup>11</sup> need not occupy us here. It seems to have a complicated history. The first variant is well documented by literary examples, up to Tintoretto's time. Possibly we even know Tintoretto's immediate source. Mrs. Jameson quoted a passage from the *Meditationes Vitae Domini Nostri Jesus Christi*, wrongly attributed to St. Bonaventura,<sup>12</sup> as a literary parallel. The text, however, is vague and does not go beyond the general statement, that Our Lady "received the child in her arms and swaddled him with becoming care." The *Golden Legend* quoting Petrus Comestor's († 1179) *Historia Scholastica*, does not go any further either; on the contrary it is even more vague,<sup>13</sup> so are the *Lombardica Historia*<sup>14</sup> (the German

10. See also: MRS. JAMESON, *Legends of the Madonna*, 4th ed., London, 1867, p. 193. A short mention is found in: E. MÂLE, *L'Art Religieux au Treizième Siècle*, Paris, 1925, p. 248. It is more than unlikely that the motive of the Madonna with the Christchild and the boy St. John is connected with this story, as MÂLE suggests. It appears comparatively late (B. BERENSON, *Three Essays in Method*, Oxford, 1927, pp. 101 ff.) and probably is related to the *Heilige Sippe* (STEPHAN BEISSEL, S.J., *Geschichte der Verehrung Marias in Deutschland im Mittelalter*, Freiburg i.B., 1909, p. 582).

11. ERNST HEIDRICH, *Altniederländische Malerei*, Jena, 1910, fig. 36; K. SMITS, *Inconografie van de Nederlandsche Primitieven*, Amsterdam, 1933, p. 51; ILSE FALK, in: "The Art Bulletin," XXV, 1943, pp. 139 f. fig. 12. MRS. JAMESON, *The History of Our Lord*, vol. I, p. 290, quotes a picture by Fra Angelico (FRIEDA SCHOTTMÜLLER, *Fra Angelico*, (Klassiker der Kunst vol. XVIII), Stuttgart & Berlin, 1911, p. 22) as another example, but the absence of a halo around the head of the woman holding the child indicates that she is one of the visitors, mentioned by Luke I, 58, 65, 66. See also note 21.

12. "Adveniente ergo tempore suo peperit Elizabeth filium, quem Domina levavit a terra et diligenter aptavit, ut expediens erat." The text adds the following contemplations: "Parvulus autem, ipsam quasi intelligens aspiciebat, et cum eum matri porrigere vellet, caput ad eam vertebat, et in ea solum delectabatur, et osculabatur iucunde. Considera magnificentiam Joannis. Nullus unquam talem baiulem habuit. Multa alia privilegia reperiuntur de ipso, quibus non insisto ad praesens." (Johannis Eustachii Bonaventurae Opusculorum Theologicorum, tomus secundus, Venice, 1572, apud Hieronymum Scotum, p. 516). About the importance of the *Meditationes* for the arts see: E. MÂLE, *L'Art Religieux de la Fin du Moyen-Age en France*, 3rd. ed., Paris, 1925, pp. 36 ff. The *Meditationes* seem to be of rather late date, and were perhaps written about 1376 by a Franciscan, Johannes a Caulis (BEISSEL, *Op. cit.*, p. 396, note 1.)

13. Among the representations which correspond to these succinct reports might be mentioned that by the Salimbeni brothers in S. Giovanni, in Urbino (see note 6) which has the inscription: "Chomo Naeque Santo Giovanni Battista e la Vergene Maria el Piliolo in Bracio." The passage from the *Golden Legend* and the *Historia Scholastica* are quoted in: ILSE FALK, *Studien zu Andrea Pisano* (Diss. Zürich), Hamburg, 1940, p. 98. Without the help of Miss FALK's admirable study on the iconography of St. John, the only one that there is, this essay would not have come to any results. (Incidentally, Miss FALK belonged to the group of HENRI FOCILLON's students in Paris.)

14. *Lombardica Historia*, Nürnberg, Koberger, 1482, fol. LXX vo.



version of the *Legenda Anuue*), the *Passional*,<sup>15</sup> and the *Vita Christi* by Ludolphus of Saxony, the Carthusian († 1378).<sup>16</sup> Tintoretto's source may have been a famous medieval compilation of uncertain origin and authorship, whose translation into Italian by Domenico Cavalca († 1342) was frequently printed in Venice and elsewhere during the late XV and early XVI Centuries under the title *Vite dei Santi Padri*, and published again in Venice right at the time of Tintoretto's maturity, in the year 1565.<sup>17</sup> It is not unlikely that he may have known either this or one of the earlier editions.

Elizabeth does not play a conspicuous part in the story of the birth of her son, as related in this book; the interest centers entirely around Mary. It is sufficient to give a translation of the text, to show how close, in both letter and spirit, Tintoretto's picture comes to it. After a detailed paraphrasing of the biblical account of the Visitation,<sup>18</sup> it reads:<sup>19</sup> "Now we come to the delivery of Lady Saint Elizabeth, who, when she felt her hour approach, desired greatly that Our Lady remain at her side and would not depart; and so much pleasure did she have in seeing her and in using familiarity with her, that it almost seems as if she felt but little the pains of childbirth. . . . Now, behold, this holy boy was born; and Lady Elizabeth asked her nursemaids that they would not touch him, and she turned to Our Lady and reverently begged of her that she would touch him first, before any other person, and would lift him from the ground. And she ordered the nursemaids that they instruct her, if it were necessary, because Our Lady was fifteen years old and, maybe, never had witnessed a birth, because she did not mingle much with people."<sup>20</sup> And Our Lady lifted the child from the ground and wrapped him in a beautiful piece of white linen and took him onto her lap. At once the holy boy, who had been crying, lay quiet in the lap of Our Lady and

15. The passage is printed in: ILSE FALK, *Op. cit.*, p. 99.

16. LUDOLPHE LE CHARTREUX, *La Grande Vie de Jesus-Christ*, translated by FLORENT BROQUIN, Paris, 1870, vol. I, p. 107. A Latin text (Venice, 1581, *apud Guerraeos Fratres et Franciscum Zilettum*) has a much more concise and neutral text than this French edition. In fact it reproduces literally Bede's statement (see note 23).

17. Cf. the bibliography in: DOMENICO CAVALCA, *Vite de' Santi Padri, per Cura di Bartolomeo Sorio e di A. Racheli*, Milan, n.d., p. X. In the two introductions of this edition (one is a reprint of that of DOMENICO MARIA MANNI's edition of 1731-35), the difficult question of the authorship of the original as well as of the translation is discussed.

18. Luke, I, 39-56.

19. CAVALCA, *Op. cit.*, p. 405.

20. This is the inversion of an argument which was frequently used to prove that the Virgin was *not* present at the event. Nicolaus de Lyra († 1340), in his *Glossa (ad Lucam I, 16)* refuses to give credence to the story, quoting some doctors of the Church who say that Mary departed before the Birth of St. John, because virgins were not allowed to be present at a delivery, and other, married, women assisted Elizabeth. He may be referring to THEOPHYLACTUS, *Enarratio in Evangelium Lucae* (XI Century) (MIGNE, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 123, col. 713/14.); Cf. also NICEPHORUS CALLISTUS, *Ecclesiasticae Historiae* (XIV Century) (MIGNE, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 145, col. 655/6.). These two authorities are continually quoted in later literature in support of this view.

seemed to nestle to her womb as if he said: Now I am near Him who made me. And Our Lady had water brought to her, and a basin, and washed and swaddled the holy child and took him in her arms and brought him to Zacharias." This is the part of the story which may have inspired Tintoretto. It goes on in the same mood: "And Zacharias contemplated him with great gladness and blessed him with his hand and began to praise the Lord."<sup>21</sup> And Our Lady carried the child back to his mother, that she might feed him. And Lady Elizabeth was resting on her bed and took the boy in her arms and blessed him with great joy, and she gave him milk in his mouth and spoke thus: Take it, my son, in the name of God and His only begotten Son Jesus, Our Lord. And the boy, when he heard the name of Jesus, seemed to take the milk with pleasure and the mother blessed him over and over again. And quickly the news spread among the neighbors and their kinsfolk and their friends, and great was the rejoicing among men; never was there such joy over the birth of any child; witness that today the Church still celebrates this nativity as a solemn holiday — and there is no other saint whose birth the Church commemorates with a holiday."

As far as Tintoretto's Leningrad picture is concerned the case may rest here. The picture in S. Zaccaria apparently does not show the Virgin. Its peculiarity, angels in glory bursting in on the scene, can be explained in a more commonplace fashion.

This interpretation of Tintoretto's *Birth of St. John* raises a number of questions which are not easily answered and which will be briefly sketched in the following paragraphs — more with the intention of calling attention to them than with the pretence of suggesting answers.

It is difficult to establish in what estimation the story of the presence of the Virgin at the Birth of St. John was held by official theology in Tintoretto's days. Certainly at no time was it generally accepted, and occasionally it even met with more or less serious disapproval. When and where the story originated is not clear. The earliest mention found so far occurs in St. Ambrose's commentary to Luke: "*Non enim sola familiaritas est causa, quod diu mansit, sed etiam tanti vatis profectus.*"<sup>22</sup> Beda refers to it in his commentary on Luke:<sup>23</sup> "*Tam diu mansit*

21. A passage like this might be responsible for the before-mentioned representations showing the Virgin taking part in the ceremony of naming the child (see note 11). The artist's habit of telescoping the scene of the birth and that of the name-giving into one, has eliminated any chronological distinction between the two episodes. So, when the text said that the Virgin brought the child to Zacharias, it almost had to mean, for the painters and sculptors, that it was for the purpose of the naming. It is only extraordinary, that in Roger's altar as well as Andrea Pisano's door, special scenes are allotted to the name-giving and that, in this redivision of the contracted representation, the Virgin somehow was allotted to the wrong section. That the Virgin stayed long enough to attend the ceremony of the name-giving is asserted by CAVALCA, *Op. cit.*, p. 406, and implied by LUDOLPHUS OF SAXONY, *Op. cit.*, p. 112.

22. S. AMBROSIUS, *Expos. in Lc.*, lb.II, n. 29 as quoted by THEODOR INNITZER, *Johannes der Täufer*, Vienna, 1908, p. 98, note 2.

23. *The Complete Works of Venerable Bede*, trans. by G. H. GILES, vol. X, London, 1844, p. 298. Walafrid Strabo (†849) copied BEDA's statement in his *Glossa Ordinaria* (MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 114, col. 248).



*Maria, donec Elizabeth partus tempore completo praecursoris Domini sui, prop-terquam maxime venerat, nativitatem videret.*" At almost the same time it occurs in the East;<sup>24</sup> but there it also finds early contradiction, as, for instance, by Theophilactus.<sup>25</sup> In the West, during the Middle Ages it was sometimes ignored;<sup>26</sup> sometimes briefly mentioned, often with a cautious *fortassis*,<sup>27</sup> and sometimes disputed on all kinds of grounds.<sup>28</sup> The treatment of the story in general seems to remain on the level of simple exegesis of Luke I, 56: "*Mansit autem Maria cum illa quasi mensibus tribus*;"<sup>29</sup> and only a few authors of the XII, XIII and XIV Centuries seem to have indulged in the imaginative embroidery which finds its culmination in Cavalca.<sup>30</sup> The exegetic discussion has continued through the centuries down to our day.<sup>31</sup> But never in more recent times does one encounter such a naïve acceptance of the story as in Cavalca's book. That was the extreme to which the Middle Ages went in their positive reaction. The extreme reaction of the XVI and XVII Centuries lies in the opposite direction, that is, in a suppression of the story, compared with which the polemics, and the occasional silences of the Middle Ages appear mild and tolerant. The *Acta Sanctorum*, which usually con-

24. For instance, in the seventh sermon by St. Sophronios, Patriarch of Jerusalem (†638) (MIGNE, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 87, III, col. 3325, 3344). For later Byzantine examples see: FALK, *Op. cit.*, pp. 113, 194 note 189 and 196, 223.

25. See note 20.

26. For instance, Johannes Beleth in his *Rationale* (XII Century), which furnished much material to Durandus and to the *Legenda Aurea*, does not mention it all, though he has a lengthy commentary on the holiday of the Birth of St. John. (MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 202, col. 141/2). The *Mitræ* by Sicardus of Cremona (†1215) has a similar passage as Beleth and also lacks the story. (MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 213, col. 415).

27. For instance in a sermon attributed to St. Bernhard (see note 33). More definite is a sermon by St. Petrus Damianus: "*Nolebat itaque Maria discedere, donec grandaevae et puerperae ministerium sedulitatis impenderet, et quae gestabat in aula sui corporis Regem, cerneret anteire praeconem.*" (MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 144, col. 126 ff.)

28. For instance by Nicolaus de Lyra. See note 20.

29. See, for instance, ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *Opera Omnia*, ed. C. A. BORGNET, vol. 22, Paris 1894, p. 148. He quotes BEDA.

30. It seems dubious, that CAVALCA's story of St. John belongs to the presumably eastern original of the *Vite dei Santi Padri*, which may be of considerable age. Much of the last part of the work, as CAVALCA translated it, seems to be a late Florentine addition. It contains the lives of such typical Florentine saints as S. Giovanni Gualberto, S. Zanobi, S. Reparata, so that the suspicion arises, that also the life of Florence's main patron, St. John, may belong to this local appendix. The terminus *post quem* for the additions is established by the inclusion of the lives of St. Francis (canonized 1228) and of St. Elizabeth of Hungary (canonized 1235). If the *Vita di Christo* referred to on p. 413 should be LUDOLPHUS' work, at least part of this appendix might have been written even after Cavalca's death (see: FALK, p. 100). For convenience's sake, however, the book, including these appendices, is here referred to as by CAVALCA.

31. INNITZER, *Op. cit.*, pp. 98 f.; D. BUZY, *Saint Jean-Baptiste, Etudes Historiques et Critiques*, Paris 1922, pp. 41 ff. pleads for the probability of the story, basing his arguments on Johannes Maldonatus (1534-1583) (*Commentarii in Quatuor Evangelia*, Moguntiae, 1854, vol. II, p. 65) and on AUGUSTINE CALMET (1672-1757) (*Dictionnaire Historique et Critique et Chronologique de la Bible*, Paris, 1722, *sub voce* Jean). The arguments pro and contra are well summed up, for instance, in: CORNELIUS CORNELII A LAPIDE, S.J. (CORNELIS VAN DER STEEN; † 1627) *Commentarii in Evaneglia S. Lucae et S. Johannis*, Antwerp, 1660, pp. 35 f.

tain the completest possible documentation, do not even mention it.<sup>32</sup> And an instance is known, in which a XVII Century theologian saw fit to mutilate a sermon attributed to St. Bernhard of Clairvaux, in order to get rid of it.<sup>33</sup> Can these expressions of zealotism be explained by the ecclesiastical reforms of the XVI Century? And was there any particular reason why this story, which at one time flourished in charm and beauty, should be degraded by coldly-reasoned argument, or avoided completely, almost as if it were not quite safe?

There has been much speculation about the influence of the Council of Trent on the arts. Tintoretto, for one, has been characterized as a typical child of the counter-reformation,<sup>34</sup> because of his elaborate interpretations of the sacred stories. Little is gained by such statements which seem too simple to come anywhere near an understanding of a complicated situation. How difficult it is to define the scope and character of the reforms of the XVI Century has become very evident in the case of Palestrina.<sup>35</sup> Before pigeon-holing Tintoretto simply as a typical artist of the counter-reformation, would it not be better first to investigate whether or not others of his apparently original, even subjective-looking religious pictures, besides the *Miracle of St. Augustine* and the *Nativity of St. John*, might also have their roots in similar medieval traditions? Then the question should be raised, whether this particular brand of medievalism was in harmony with this period and pointed toward the future, or whether it was not perhaps the last flowering of a dying tradition. Did not Cardinal Bellarmine ask, when advising Rosweyde on his publication of the *Vitae Patrum*, which was the seed from which grew the *Acta Sanctorum*: "*Ne forte in originalibus historiis multa sint inepta, levia, improbabilia, quae risum potius quam aedificationem pariant?*"<sup>36</sup> And was not the invigoration of ecclesiastical institutions, which was the aim of this period to be

32. Only in the section which deals with the Visitation (July 2nd) is there a hint, that the Virgin might possibly have stayed to witness the Birth of the Child. The passage is absolutely noncommittal and only helps to underline the disinterest shown in the chapter on St. John (June 24th).

33. The sermon is variously attributed to St. Bernhard, St. Petrus Damianus, or Nicolaus of Clairvaux (MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 184, col. 991 ff., particularly col. 994/5, and, as by St. Petrus Damianus, *Ibid.*, vol. 144, II col. 116 ff.). The passage was cut out in B. TISSIER, *Bibliotheca Patrum Cisterciensium*, 1660 ff. and was reinstated by MABILLON. This cut as well as two others in the same sermon betrays the hand of a careful theologian. The sermon first states: "*Tanto tempore (i.e. tres menses) manet cum Elisabeth Virginalis integritas, et nunc dulciore eloquio, nunc feliciore amplexu Joannem puerum consecrat et insignit.*" So far the author of the sermon refers only to Mary's intercourse with Elizabeth before the Birth of the Child and does not say anything that goes materially beyond the text of Luke, and thus does not expose himself to the censure of his editor, who, however, suppressed what follows: "*Et fortassis usque ad diem nativitatis ejus gloriosa Virgo cum cognata morata est, donec puerum natum sinu beatissimo confoveret, et uno pariete remoto propinquorem redderet praesentiae Creatoris.*"

34. BERCKEN AND MAYER, *Op. cit.*, pp. 7, 161 ff.; ANTHONY BLUNT, *Artistic Theory in Italy, 1450-1600*, Oxford 1940, p. 117.

35. Cf. HERMANN VOSS, *Die Malerei der Spätrenaissance in Rom and Florenz*, Berlin, 1920, pp. 16 ff., where the development of music is cautiously discussed as a parallel to that of painting.

36. HIPPOLYTE DELEHAYE, S.J., *L'Oeuvre des Bollandistes, 1615-1915*, Brussels, 1920, p. 13.



brought about by a great house-cleaning with the broom of severe rational criticism? As far as Tintoretto's *Birth of St. John* is concerned, a survey of the history of the motive in theological literature, marks it definitely as an archaism. And, indeed, the subject in this interpretation seems to have disappeared altogether from the official repertoire of iconography.<sup>37</sup> The post-Tridentine era was not too favorably inclined toward unbridled imaginative story-telling. While contributing its own new subjects to iconography, it tightened up on the traditional subjects. It reduced them to an orthodox simplicity and relied for effect on new emotional interpretations rather than on what must have seemed extraneous and unwarranted embellishments.

The question is whether in Tintoretto's time anyone realized that his *Birth of St. John*, in following an apocryphal medieval tradition, might have given the subject an emphasis perhaps not altogether in harmony with strict orthodoxy.

The literary sources of the period quoted above imply by their behavior, rather than voice openly indifference or disapproval of the story. And as far as we know, Tintoretto never came in conflict with the Inquisition as Paolo Veronese did.<sup>38</sup> For the historian, that means the loss of the opportunity for an interesting insight into the period. Veronese justified himself on very mundane grounds and showed himself, possibly by intent, a poor theologian. In Tintoretto's case a hearing before the Inquisition might have been different. He could scarcely have been suspected of superficiality in religious matters and his pictures alone would have prevented him from pleading innocence because of ignorance. Thus we might have learned first, whether he drew his inspiration consciously from the books of the late medieval theologians, and, secondly, whether the inquisitors would have objected on dogmatic grounds, to his conceptions of the sacred stories. It would, however, be absurd to expect from this transitional period a clear-cut statement about such a difficult case. No one apparently ever cared to investigate Tintoretto's orthodoxy, and so the problem of the relation of his iconography to the reform tendencies of his time remains obscure.<sup>39</sup>

A contribution toward the solution of the problem can be expected from statistics concerning the printed editions of the medieval anthologies of legends.<sup>40</sup>

37. In the Venetian edition of 1581 of LUDOLPHUS THE CARTHUSIAN (cf. note 16) the chapter entitled *The Nativity of St. John* is headed by a woodcut of the *Visitation*.

38. J. SCHLOSSER-MAGNINO, *La Letteratura Artistica*, Florence, 1935, p. 373; E. MÂLE, *L'Art Religieux après le Concile de Trente*, Paris, 1932, pp. 1 ff.; ARMAND BASCHET, *Paul Véronèse Devant le Saint-Office*, Orleans, 1880.

39. For the complex problem which is stated here in reference to an isolated phenomenon in an oversimplified fashion, cf. E. MÂLE, *Ibid.*, *passim*; W. WEISBACH, *Der Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation*, Berlin, 1921; N. PEVSNER, in: "Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft," XLVI, 1925, pp. 244 ff.; SCHLOSSER, *Op. cit.*, pp. 361 ff.; A. BLUNT, *Op. cit.*, pp. 108 ff. To the last mentioned author we owe by far the clearest and best documented statements concerning the problem.

40. For the following cf. R. BENZ in the introduction of his German translation of the *Legenda Aurea*, Jena, 1917, vol. I, p. XXV and MÂLE, *Ibid.*, p. 97.

It is certain, that the reinterpreting of the gospel stories and of the legends of the saints, as well as the compiling of apocryphal material that produced books like the *Golden Legend*, went on to the end of the XVIII Century. But since about the middle of the XVI Century this type of literature seems to have been on a less conspicuous, unofficial level, and the older works seem to have disappeared altogether from active use. The last of the numerous editions of Cavalca's *Vite dei Santi Padri*, intended for general consumption, seems to have been that of 1565. The next edition, considered standard, is that by D. M. Manni in 1731-1735, the work of a scholarly antiquarian. That means, that the book, after a period of neglect, was relegated to the morgue of historical sources.<sup>41</sup> Similar must have been the fate of the *Liber de Vita Christi* by Ludolphus of Saxony. The last of its early editions<sup>42</sup> seems to have been the translation by Francesco Sansovino, the son of Tintoretto's older colleague, Jacopo Sansovino, which was twice printed in Venice, in 1570 and 1589, and which should be examined as another possible source of inspiration for Tintoretto, even if in this particular case it does not prove helpful. It would be worth while to investigate whether these two cases can be taken as typical. They suggest that, beginning with the second half of the XVI Century a complete change took place in the evaluation of these books. As far as their religious value was concerned they became obsolete, but they emerged again through the offices of the great polyhistor of the XVII Century as historical sources. And now they were submitted to a critical historical scrutiny which is worlds apart from the broad-mindedness of at least a part of the Middle Ages: When the Bollandists buried in silence the legends gathered around the story of the Birth of St. John, with which they must have been perfectly well acquainted,<sup>43</sup> it was certainly due to the conscientiousness of their historical method.<sup>44</sup>

And yet, there remains a suspicion that more serious reasons than mere considerations of historical accuracy, put a stop to the elaborations on the story of the Birth of St. John. After all, other apocryphal traditions, as for instance, those regarding the Life of the Virgin, succeeded in living on in literature and art. The rather extended complexity of the apocryphal stories which had accumulated around the Nativity of St. John did not develop accidentally, and the scissors of the historians did not trim off merely irrelevant and fanciful matter. That these legends once had a deep meaning is proven by some comments in the *Golden*

41. These remarks refer only to CAVALCA's version. Editions of the Greek and Latin versions occupied the scholarly world as early as about 1600. Cf. DELEHAYE, *Op. cit.*, pp. 16 ff.

42. LUDOLPHE LE CHARTREUX, *Op. cit.*, vol. I. pp. IX f.

43. Witness the efforts of HÉRIBERT ROSWEYE to reconstruct the text of the original of the *Vitae Patrum*. See note 41.

44. See: DELEHAYE, *Op. cit.*, pp. 29, 94 ff.



*Legend* and in the *Rationale* by Durandus of Mende († 1296).<sup>45</sup> Both explain at length why the birth of the Precursor is celebrated by the Church with a special holiday, and both try to account for certain usages connected with the celebration. In enumerating the distinctions of St. John, they include the services that the Virgin offered him at his birth.<sup>46</sup> That goes to show how seriously the story was taken by some theologians. However, this must have been a comparatively new argument, as the elaborate story, which speaks of the "services" of the Virgin, does not seem to be very old.<sup>47</sup> And controversial as it may have been, it certainly had not sprung from the background from which most of the cycle of stories about St. John had issued.

Closer to fundamentals is another argument found in both books. In discussing the Nativity of the Virgin, the remark is made that the birth of only three beings is commemorated by the Church, that of Christ, that of the Virgin, and that of St. John.<sup>48</sup> Durandus compares St. John to the morning star, Mary to the light of dawn, and the Birth of Christ to the rising of the sun. This is not dry allegory, but the reflection of a profound idea. Both books, on another occasion draw a calendar parallel between the Birth of St. John and that of Christ. They stress that the two events are celebrated on crucial days in the course of the sun, June 24th and December 24/25th.<sup>49</sup> These are indications of the influence on the Christian religion of a very old and far-flung cycle of myths.<sup>50</sup> Whatever the avenues, the extent, and the importance of this influence may have been, the common mythical background of the three nativity stories, as reported in the Gospels and the apocrypha,<sup>51</sup> must have been one of the reasons why the stories strongly resemble each other. They are composed of the same basic ele-

45. GUGLIELMUS DURANDUS MIMEATENSIS, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum*, Lib. VII, cap. 14. The statements of DURANDUS and the *Legenda Aurea* are exactly parallel and frequently identical in wording. For a common source for both see note 26.

46. *Legenda Aurea*, vol. I, col. 538; DURANDUS, *lib. VII, cap. 14 § 1*.

47. ILSE FALK, *Op. cit.*, pp. 98 f.; Cf. also note 30.

48. *Legenda Aurea*, vol. II, col. 133; DURANDUS, *lib. VII, cap. 14, § 2, cap. 28, § 4*. For this and the following cf. also the *Speculum Ecclesiae* by HONORIUS OF AUTUN (MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 172, col. 965) and JOHANNES BELETH, *Rationale*, l. c.

49. *Legenda Aurea*, vol. I, col. 547/48; DURANDUS, *lib. VII, cap. 14, § 13*. This parallel, which makes use of St. John III, 30, is found in St. Augustine (INNITZER, *Op. cit.*, p. 408; cf. also: MARTIN DIBELIUS, *Die urchristliche Ueberlieferung von Johannes dem Täufer*, Göttingen, 1911, p. 75).

50. The most remarkable contribution to the literature on the "mythical background" of the New Testament is: EDUARD NORDEN, *Die Geburt des Kindes* (*Studien der Bibliothek Warburg*, vol. III), Leipzig-Berlin, 1924, which on pp. 99 ff. deals with our problem. Cf. also T. J. THORNBURN, *The Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels*, New York, 1916, p. 129. For a critic of the "mythical" interpretation of the Gospels, cf. CARL ALBRECHT BERNOULLI, *Johannes der Täufer*, Leipzig, 1918, pp. 352 ff., and NORDEN, p. 109, note 1.

51. The *Birth of the Virgin* is found in the *Book of St. James* or *Protoevangelium* (M. R. JAMES, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford, 1924 and 1926, pp. 30 ff.).

ments;<sup>52</sup> they are essentially the same story applied to three different beings. No wonder then, that two of them may be related to each other in the *Biblia Pauperum*,<sup>53</sup> and that another pair of them, when painted, could look so similar to each other, as to cause the confusion which existed concerning Tintoretto's picture.

The Middle Ages recognized and exploited the connection between the three stories without, of course, a knowledge of their historical background, which was revealed only by modern biblical criticism and by studies in the comparative history of religion. However, some medieval theologians, as well as their later colleagues, may themselves have been not a little disturbed by the strange similarity of the three tales. Luke had taken parts of the legends of the Birth of St. John and had welded them together with the tale of the Nativity of Christ into a well-balanced unit. Did the story of the Birth of the Virgin forever have to stay outside the canon, in order to prevent a third repetition? Was it to avoid competition with the childhood stories of Christ, that those of St. John were carefully sifted, so that only the episodes reported by Luke found general credence, while the flight of Elizabeth and John with its miraculous incidents and the death of Zacharias, never really gained entry into medieval art and literature?<sup>54</sup> They have survived farther away from the core of Christian tradition than the apocrypha of the Virgin and of Christ<sup>55</sup> even at the outermost fringe of Christianity—as for instance, in the sacred books of the Mandaeans, a gnostic sect of southern Babylonia, in whose teachings St. John holds a place of honor.<sup>56</sup> It

52. Cf. the comparisons made by DIBELIUS, *Op. cit.*, p. 67, and HUGH J. SCHONFIELD, *The Lost "Book of the Nativity of St. John,"* Edinburgh, 1929, pp. 28 ff. These parallels can be broadened to include a number of figures of the Old Testament, which has been done since earliest times. (Cf. MAURICE GOGUEL, *Au Seuil de l'Evangile. Jean-Baptiste*, Paris, 1928, p. 70; INNITZER, *Op. cit.*, pp. 100 f.; SCHONFIELD, pp. 56 ff.) Incidentally, SCHONFIELD counts among these parallel stories: Rev. XII, 1 ff. His suggestion, that it is an echo of a lost *Book of the Nativity of St. John*, can be supported by a curious detail: In this version of the *Birth of the Child* it is a *dragon* which causes his eventual flight (as Herod that of Christ to Egypt). Now JOHANNES BELETH, *Op. cit.*, DURANDUS, *lib. VII. cap. 14*, § 10 and 11, and the *Legenda Aurea*, vol. I, col. 547, explain the bonfires lighted during the vigil of June 24th as a means of preventing *dragons* from poisoning wells. Is there a connection? Other explanations of the bonfires are numerous and probably all to some extent correct (INNITZER, *Op. cit.*, pp. 394, 419 f.; NORDEN, *Op. cit.*, p. 109, note 2; J. G. FRAZER, *The Golden Bough*, Index).

53. A XV Century group of the *Biblia Pauperum* makes the Nativity of St. John the TYPUS of that of Christ (HENRIK CORNELL, *Biblia Pauperum*, Stockholm, 1925, p. 301f., pls. 51, 55). The scene here includes the Virgin holding St. John.

54. M. R. JAMES, *Op. cit.*, p. 48. The book of SCHONFIELD contains the most complete collection of the legends of the childhood of St. John. For the few representations in art which are taken from them see: FALK, *Op. cit.*, pp. 33, 100 f., 110, 112, 121 f., 126, 143, 145, 160. Florence produced in the XV Century the representation of Christ and St. John meeting as boys. (BERENSON, l.c. p. 102 n.; VALENTINER, in: "Jahrbuch der Preuss. Kunstsammlungen," 56, 1935, pp. 213 ff.)

55. For Ethiopian Apocrypha cf. BLACK's bibliography in the "Bulletin of the New York Public Library," XXXII, 1928, p. 535 ff.

56. For the controversial problem of the Mandaeans cf., the cautious book by ALFRED LOISY, *Le Mandéisme et les Origines Chrétiennes*, Paris 1934, and GOGUEL, *Op. Cit.*, p. 113 ff. For the Islamic versions of the stories consult *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. IV, Leyden and London, 1934, p. 1149 (St. John) and p. 1202 (Zacharias).



is difficult to tell in which sequence the three stories originally evolved, or whether they did not derive independently from the same background. As far as the legends of the Nativity of Christ and St. John are concerned, priority has been claimed for both. Whatever the truth of these claims may be, the cause underlying the dispute seems to be clear. Most modern scholars are agreed that St. John, during his lifetime and for some time after, was considered by many not the precursor of Christ, but the founder of a new creed himself.<sup>57</sup> It also seems generally accepted that his followers, like those of Christ, had accumulated a certain amount of literature about his life and preachings. It is tempting to explain the similarity between the stories of the birth of both as the result of a rivalry between their followers, with each side trying to match the claims of the other as to the miraculous circumstances of the birth of its leaders. As far as the medieval reaction is concerned, only the final result, that is, the striking similarity, is of interest. That this was to lead to the non-acceptance of the apocryphal cycle of the stories of St. John in its entirety, and to a certain reluctance to elaborate the episodes which had become canonical, can be explained with the significant words put into the mouth of the Baptist in the Fourth Gospel III, 30: "*Illum oportet crescere, me autem minui.*"

The elaboration which, on the basis of a piece of exegesis, introduced the Virgin into the story of the Birth of St. John was, in a way, a thoughtless piece of embellishment. That it might give offence by placing undue emphasis on the Baptist, certainly never occurred to its authors, since St. John's place in the hierarchy had been settled for many centuries. Responsibility for it must be attributed to the ever growing intensity of the worship of the Virgin in the high Middle Ages.<sup>58</sup> Even though, in Cavalca's account, Mary is shown in an almost menial relation to Elizabeth, she over-shadows her completely. Humility was one of the virtues of the Virgin<sup>59</sup> and medieval theologians took this story to illustrate this virtue. "*Ex utero matris suscipitur [Johannes] Matris Domini stupenda et humillima obstetricis sedulitate,*" said Petrus Cellensis († 1183) in a sermon.<sup>60</sup> Others saw in these services of Mary a parallel with the *Vita Activa* of Martha.<sup>61</sup>

57. Cf. the books by INNITZER (p. 384 ff.), DIBELIUS, GOGUEL, SCHÖNFELD, and many other studies.

58. FALK, *Op. cit.*, pp. 99, 196 note 223.

59. For literary examples see: M. MEISS, in: "The Art Bulletin," XVIII, 1936, pp. 456 ff.; BEISSEL, *Op. cit.*, *passim*.

60. MIGNE, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 102, col. 814. The Humility of the Virgin is a leitmotif in the interpretation of the whole Visitation. Cf., for instance, the following detail from PSEUDO-BONAVENTURA (*Op. cit.*, p. 515): "*Deinde se ad sedendum ponentes, Domina humillima ad inferiorum locum se ponuit ad pedes Elisabeth.*"

61. LUDOLPHE LE CHARTREUX, *Op. cit.*, p. 106 f., this explanation is based on the Gospel reading on the day of the Assumption of the Virgin. For the usual interpretation of this Gospel reading, see: DURANDUS, *lib. VII, cap. 24*, § 6, 7; Cf. also: BEISSEL, *Op. cit.*, pp. 111, 113.

However, all these beautiful interpretations do not seem to have helped the story. By enhancing the importance of St. John the story threatened to revive controversies which had been buried long ago. It did not fit into the balance of things which had established itself.

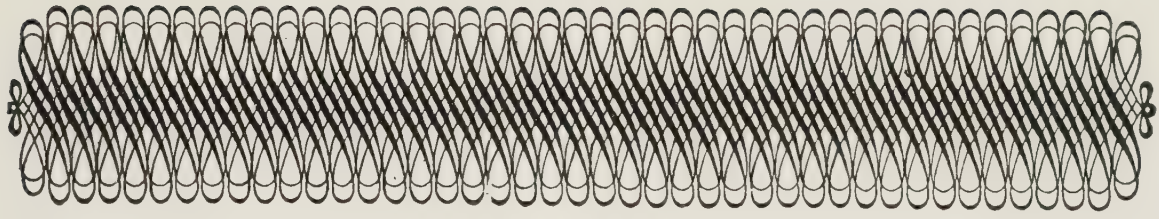
Despite its length, this "note on two pictures by Tintoretto" does not deserve a more ambitious title. The reader will have realized that the preceding speculations are but the ramblings of an amateur in vast and unfamiliar fields, and that much detailed work still remains to be done in order to arrive at certainty. The interpretation of Tintoretto's *Birth of St. John* has opened many vistas, and it seemed to the writer that he should point to them as leading to subjects worthy of further investigation. If iconography is taken to mean more than a mere gathering of precedents or parallels, it can be turned into a fascinating chapter of universal history. Alas, the art-historian who makes attempts in this direction is seldom sufficiently equipped to answer the great variety of questions which confront him. Therefore these notes are submitted to the reader in all modesty, with the request to discard them for any set of better questions or solutions he may find. *Veritatem oportet crescere, haec autem minui.*

January, 1945.

ULRICH A. MIDDELDORF.







# EL GRECO'S *LAOCOON* IN THE NATIONAL GALLERY

**E**L GRECO'S *Death of Laocoon and his Sons*, recently presented to the National Gallery of Art in Washington by Mr. Samuel Kress, forms a notable and welcome addition to the collection of Spanish paintings. Undoubtedly to be dated between 1606 and 1610, it is an outstanding example of the artist's late manner which has had such an enormous influence on modern art. This picture well illustrates the extraordinary nature of El Greco's genius, his strangeness and isolation in the history of European art. Yet it also proves that in spite of this aloofness as an artist, he was not only extremely receptive to the ideas of his time and adopted country but even took over many of the formulae of artistic expression current in his day.

In this canvas (Fig. 1),<sup>1</sup> Laocoon lies with bent knees widespread, among the rocks on a dark brown ground. Gazing upward, he grasps with his left hand the serpent writhing beneath him, while with the other he throttles the monster whose open jaws are already fastening on his brow. His son at the right, the first to be bitten, has succumbed and reclines on the ground with arms relaxed and knees drawn up as if asleep (Fig. 6). At the left, the second son, wearing a light brown loincloth, sways backward. With outstretched arms, he struggles with a serpent looped around and about to bury its fangs in his heart (Fig. 5).

On the right stand two figures who seem to pay no attention to the tragedy being enacted before them. The male, with his back turned and left arm uplifted, is completely nude. The blonde female figure wearing light drapery, averts her face from the scene. Their indifference may indicate that they represent gods, possibly Apollo and Artemis, and this punishment would then have been imposed upon Laocoon because he married against the wish of Apollo, whose priest he was.

The city of Troy, against a light brown background (Fig. 4), is represented by a view of Toledo. The wooden horse stands on the arid plain with its head turned expectantly toward the Visagra Gate. The city slopes downhill to where the Tagus river flows beneath the Alcántara bridge. Above appear the buildings of the town, the Alcázar, the Cathedral, and the many towers outlined against the white and green sky. But as so frequently in El Greco's work, the city he loved so well appears rather as a strange visionary background to heighten and intensify the tragic splendor of the conception.<sup>2</sup>

1. H. 55 $\frac{7}{8}$  x W. 76 in. (1.42 x 1.93 m.) This can be identified with the picture of a *Laocoonte*, "Copia del Tiziano," mentioned in the inventory of 1791 of the Gallery of King Carlos III of Spain, in the Palace of San Lorenzo. Before 1866 it was in the Palace of San Telmo, Seville, in the Galeria de SS. A.A.R.R. los Serenisimos Señores Infantes de España, the Duke of Montpensier (included in the Catalogue of this Collection, 1866, no. 155). Before 1908, it was in the Palace of the Infante D. Antonio de Orléans in Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Cádiz. Later it was owned by the firm of Durand-Ruel, Paris. Before 1914 it was bought by Frau von Schwabach, wife of the pianist Edwin Fischer, of Basel and Berlin, upon the recommendation of Hugo von Tschudi, Director of the National Gallery, Berlin, and the Neue Staats Gallery, Munich. It was on loan at the Alte Pinakothek, Munich (1910-1913), and was later in the Collections of M. Arnold, Berlin, E. Fisher, Charlottenburg, and H.R.H. Prince Paul, Regent of Yugoslavia, Belgrade; purchased by Mr. Samuel H. Kress in 1946.

2. BIBLIOGRAPHY: M. B. COSSIO, *El Greco*, Madrid, Suárez, 1908, pp. 357-364, 579 (N° 162), pl. 67; A. F. CALVERT AND C. G. HARTLEY, *El Greco*, N. Y. Lane, 1909, p. 170, pl. 126; AUGUST L. MAYER, *El Greco*, Munich, Delphin, 1911, 73-74; J. MEIER-GRAEFE, *Greco Peintre Baroque*, in: "L'Art Décoratif," Paris, 1912, XXVIII, p. 248; "Rassegna d'Arte," 1914, 14, 73 (reproduction); HUGO KEHRER, *Die Kunst des Greco*, Munich, Schmidt, 1914, pp. 85-87, pl. 61; A. L. MAYER, *El Greco*, Munich, 1916, 32, pl. 51; IDEM, *El Greco*, Rome, 1921, 14, pl. XXIV; "Burlington Magazine," 1923, 42, 260 (reproduction facing p. 259); E. DUGUÉ TRAPIER, *El Greco*, New York, Hispanic Society of America, 1925, pp. 126-28, pl. 34; AUGUST L. MAYER, *Domenico Theotocopuli El Greco*, Munich, Hanfstaengl, 1926, 50 (N° 311), pl. 66; IDEM, *La Pintura Española*, Barcelona, 1926, pp. 109-110; IDEM, *Historia de la Pintura Española*, Madrid, 1928, fig. 200; EMILIO H. DEL VILLAR, *Estudios Hispánicos, El Greco en España*, Madrid, Espasa, 1928, 133-134, pl. 28; OTTO GRAUTOFF, *Die Malerei im Barockzeitalter, in Frankreich und Spanien*, Potsdam, 1928, p. 229; AUGUST L. MAYER, *El Greco*, Berlin, Klinkhardt, 1931, 163, fig. 120; JOSÉ GOYANES CAPDEVILA, *El Greco, pintor místico*, Madrid. Gráficas Ugina, 1936, p. 91, fig. 42; M. LEGENDRE ET A. HARTMANN, *Domenico Theotocopoulos, dit El Greco*, Paris, Hyperion, 1937, pl. 482; LUDWIG GOLDSCHIEDER, *El Greco*, London, Oxford University Press, Phaidon, 1938, p. 16, pl. 216; STEPHAN BOURGEOIS, *El Greco (Byrdcliffe Afternoons)*, Woodstock, N. Y., 1939, pp. 99-101; HUGO KEHRER, *Greco als Gestalt des Manierismus*, Munich, Filser, 1939, pp. 100-108, pl. 74 (detail); A. L. MAYER, *Historia de la Pintura Española*, Madrid, Espasa, 1942, p. 268, fig. 206.





FIG. 1. — GRECO. — The Laocoon. — Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C.

This painting depicts an incident which occurred before the capture of the city of Troy by the Greeks, a tale best known, perhaps, as recounted by Virgil in the *Aeneid* (Book II). For ten years, the Greeks had laid siege to Troy when, despairing of subduing the city by force, they finally adopted a stratagem suggested by wily Ulysses. Feigning to abandon the beleaguered town, the Greeks withdrew their ships and concealed them behind an adjacent island. An immense wooden horse, intended as a propitiatory offering to Minerva to ensure a prosperous voyage home, had been constructed and filled with armed men. The Trojans, seeing the encampment broken up and believing the Greeks to have raised the siege, threw open the gates of the city and issued forth.

The great horse was examined. Some recommended that it be taken into the city as a trophy, others distrusted it. "Then, foremost of all and with a great throng following, Laocoon in hot haste runs down from the citadel's height, and cries from



FIG. 2. — GRECO. — The Laocöon. — Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. (Detail).

was brought before the chieftains. He told a tale of having escaped from the Greeks who, sailing away, had left him behind. The wooden horse, a votive offering to Apollo, was made so huge to prevent its being carried into the city because Calchas, the seer, had foretold that if the Trojans obtained it, they would triumph over the Greeks. "Through such snares and craft of foresworn Sinon the story won belief, and we were ensnared by wiles and forced tears — we whom neither the son of Tydeus nor Achilles of Larissa laid low, not ten years, not a thousand ships!"

"Hereupon another portent, more fell

afar: 'Oh, wretched citizens, what wild frenzy is this? Do you believe the foe has sailed away? Or think ye any gifts of the Greeks are free from treachery? Is it thus ye know Ulysses? Either enclosed in this frame there lurk Achaeans, or this has been built as an engine of war against our walls, to spy into our homes and come down upon the city from above; or some trickery lurks therein. Trust not the horse, ye Trojans. Whatever it be, I fear the Greeks, even when bringing gifts.' So saying, with a mighty force he hurled his great spear at the beast's side and the arched frame of the belly. The spear stood quivering and with the womb's reverberation the vaults rang hollow, sending forth a moan."<sup>3</sup>

For a moment, the fate of the wooden horse hung in the balance. Just then Sinon, a Greek captive of Argive birth,

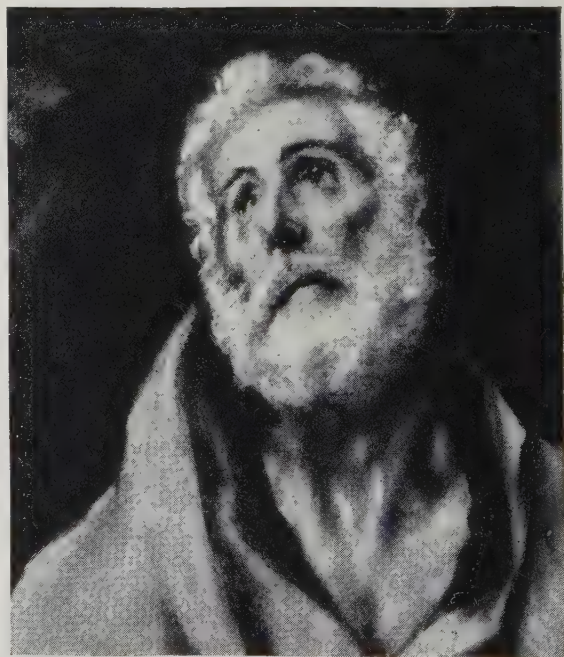


FIG. 3. — GRECO. — St. Peter. — Phillips Memorial Gallery, Washington, D. C. (Detail).

3. VIRGIL, *Aeneid*, II, pp. 40-53; English translation by H. RUSHTON FAIRCLOUGH, London, 1926, p. 297.





FIG. 4. — GRECO. — *The Laocoon*. — Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. (Detail).

and more frightful by far, is thrust upon us, unhappy ones, and confounds our unforeseeing souls. Laocoon, priest of Neptune, as drawn by lot, was slaying a great bull at the wonted altars; and lo! from Tenedos, over the peaceful depths — I shudder as I tell the tale — a pair of serpents with endless coils are breasting the sea and side by side making for the shore. Their bosoms rise amid the surge, and their crests, blood-red, overtop the waves; the rest of them skims the main behind and their huge backs curve in many a fold; we hear the sound sent from foaming seas. And now they were gaining the fields and, with blazing eyes suffused with blood and fire, were licking with quivering tongues their hissing mouths. Pale at the sight, we scatter. They in unswerving course fare toward Laocoon; and first each serpent enfolds in its embrace the youthful bodies of his two sons and with its fangs feeds upon the hapless limbs. Then himself too, as he comes to their aid, weapons in hand, they seize and bind in mighty folds; and now, twice encircling his waist, twice winding their scaly backs around his throat, they tower above with head and



FIG. 5. — GRECO. — The Laocöon. — Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. (Detail).

and even recorded their sentiments for posterity.

These effusions have their value now in revealing the point of view of the late Renaissance and early Baroque, the time of El Greco, who may have seen the marble in Rome. The naturalism and unrestrained emotion were congenial to the ideals of contemporary art, and artists sought inspiration formally as well as technically in this great masterpiece from the ancient world. The perception of its high worth was universal.

Michelangelo's admiration, if not actually a determining factor in shaping cultivated opinion, was at least characteristic of the age. Titian was unusual in recovering from his first enthusiasm. Tintoretto had a copy in his studio. El

lofty necks. He the while strains his hands to burst the knots, his fillets steeped in gore and black venom; the while he lifts to heaven hideous cries, like the bel-lowings of a wounded bull that has fled from the altar and shaken from its neck the ill-aimed axe."<sup>4</sup>

The Laocöon cult has had a curious history. Of all sculpture surviving from antiquity, the group in the Vatican has probably given rise to most admiration and discussion. Identified from the description of Pliny, *Laocöon's* discovery in 1506 was an important event in the history of European art. The Romans held a festival in its honor and it remained an object of intense interest long after it was found. Humanists raised their voices in enthusiastic approbation



FIG. 6. — GRECO. — The Laocöon. — Kress Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D. C. (Detail).

4. *Ibid*, II, pp. 195-223, Eng. trans., pp. 307-309.



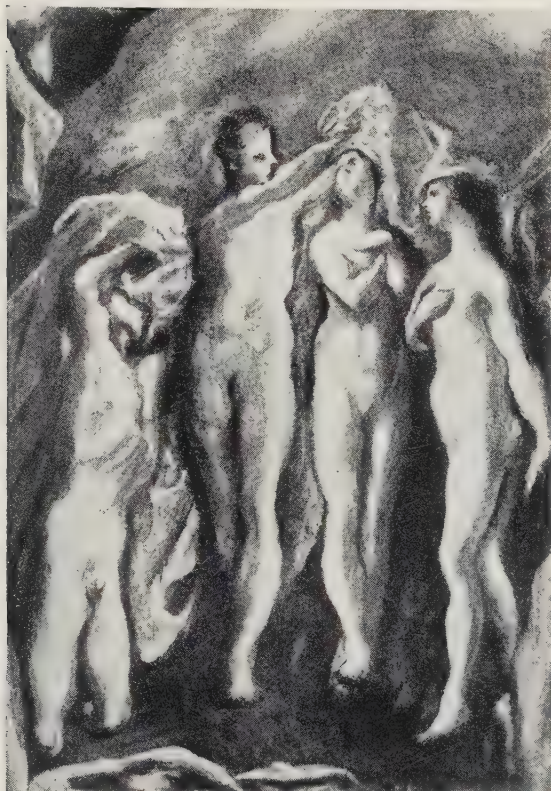


FIG. 7. — GRECO. — *The Apocalypse*. — Zuloaga Collection, Zumaya, Spain.

sions by his fellow artists. Probably it had become only a rather dim recollection from his early manhood in the studios of Venice. Or he may have known ancient recensions still extant in his day, perhaps even from his Greek youth. The *Laocoon* fresco in the House of Menander in Pompeii, based on a still earlier prototype, also has two figures prone on the ground. El Greco's library in Toledo included what was for the time a considerable collection of the classics, and the first inventory of El Greco's effects after his death shows that he highly valued his Greek books.<sup>5</sup>

5. SAN ROMÁN, *El Greco en Toledo*, Madrid, 1910, pp. 189, 195-196.

Greco must have known both this and Titian's version. Bramante commissioned Alonso Berruguete to model the group in wax for use in making a cast — a more direct link with Spain.

Of the many prints of *Laocoon*, the earliest seems to be the engraving by Marco Dente, a pupil of Marcantonio Raimondi, who first rendered the group before its restoration and again a Baroque version in a wide landscape. Several other late Renaissance and Baroque artists used the *motif* such as Fontana (Fig. 11).

El Greco's interpretation of the legend, his only mythological subject, differs in certain respects from the numerous ver-



FIG. 8. — GRECO. — *Resurrection of Christ*, 1576. — Santo Domingo el Antiguo, Toledo, Spain.



FIG. 9. — GRECO. — Resurrection of Christ (1597-1604). — Prado, Madrid. (Detail).

In the oldest version of the myth known, *Proctos*, an excerpt from the *Iliu-persis* by Arctinos of Miletos, just one of the sons perishes with Laocoon. Virgil not only differs in his account but also was later in point of time than the artists of the Vatican group. Or possibly, simple exigencies of design may explain why there are two supine figures. El Greco's arbitrary rhythm shifts or destroys even what symmetry was left in the loose composition of the Baroque. The artist was not one to quibble over iconography, especially secular, where it was not necessary to reckon with the Church.<sup>6</sup>

A striking characteristic of El Greco which persists throughout all his later work, is his constant repetition or variation of his own motifs. Doubtless this was one reason that he kept the collection of small replicas of which Pacheco speaks. Not only whole compositions were so utilized, but single figures as

well, alone or in new combinations. As these were frequently separated by long intervals of time, considerable diversity of manner occasionally appears in a single work by the master. So in the head of the writhing Laocoon, a type occurs that the artist employed over and over again, especially in representations of the Penitent Peter. Laocoon's head (Fig. 2) is practically identical with that of *St. Peter* in the Phillips Memorial Gallery in Washington (Fig. 3), in a *St. Peter* in the Sacristy of the Escorial Library,<sup>7</sup> and in several other representations of this saint.<sup>8</sup>

As for the recumbent son on the right of Laocoon, the position of this figure is much alike, but in reverse, to that in the lower right of the *Resurrection of Christ* in the Church of Santo Domingo el Antiguo in Toledo, executed in 1576

6. For a full discussion of the iconography of *Laocoon*, see: RICHARD FÖRSTER, *Laocoon im Mittelalter und in der Renaissance*, "Jahrb. der Königl. Preuss. Kunstsammlungen," Berlin, 1906, XXVII, pp. 149-178. El Greco's *Laocoon* is represented on p. 174, fig. 17. The most able discussion of the Vatican *Laocoon* is the work of MARGARETE BIEBER, *Laocoon*, N. Y., 1942.

7. COSSIO, *El Greco*, Fig. 52.

8. Norwegian National Gallery, Oslo; Bowes Mus., Barnard Castle, 1901, N° 310; Museum of Fine Arts, San Diego, Cal.



(Fig. 8), and it appears again in the *Resurrection* in the Prado Museum, Madrid (Fig. 9). The young nude figure of the god Apollo, standing with back turned, resembles the Hermes in the *Martyrdom of St. Mauritius* (Fig. 10). In this canvas he is the guide of the dead, indicating by a gesture the way to Hades. The outstanding nude figure toward the back in the *Apocalypse* of the Zuloaga Collection, Zumaya (Fig. 7), is also closely similar.

In spite of his cold color, El Greco was especially indebted to painters of the School of Venice and to other North Italian artists. Evidence of this appears in the form and in the style in which the wooden horse of Troy is portrayed before the Visagra Gate of Toledo. Unquestionably this was derived from a work by Niccolò dell'Abate.<sup>9</sup> In the *Crucifixion* in Cincinnati (Fig. 12),<sup>10</sup> there is a very similar horse, this time with a rider, about the same distance from the gate. It is also interesting to note that Troy, here represented by the city of Toledo, is rendered in much the same manner in El Greco's *Plan of Toledo*.

El Greco's figures, in the surge of their exaggerated movement, form a magnificent design of breadth and simplicity. The placing, relating, and contrasting of the curves constitute an essential feature of the design, an element of linearism which, in its origin, harks back to Mannerism. El Greco shared in the reaction against the "Classical" of the High Renaissance, against academic symmetry and the static poses of studio models. He was more in sympathy with such subjective and experimental geniuses as Tintoretto. His foreground figures are unnaturally large and are placed toward the front plane while the background is disproportionately small and often appears as a backdrop.



FIG. 10. — GRECO. — The Martyrdom of St. Mauritius and the Theban Legion. — Escorial, Madrid. (Detail with Hermes).

9. "Mostra del Correggio," *Catologo*, Parma, 1935, No. 101; "Il cavallo de Troya, affresco riportato su tela." This belongs to the Galleria Estense of Modena (No. 601). I am indebted for this observation to MR. STEPHAN BOURGEOIS.

10. COSSIO, *Op. cit.*, pl. 138.

Space in El Greco's later works has sometimes an irrational and illogical quality, but his figures do not need a rationally defined space since they conform to no natural law. The striking disparity of the dimensions of the foreground with reference to the background, the precipitous diminution given by a near station point, will always enforce recession movement. Such a *motif* as the exaggerated foreground was first possible when fine proportions were no longer all-important but artists were capable of appreciating the interest of abrupt rhythm.

The Manneristic elements, such as distortion and schematic drawing of the human figure or the foreshortening and arbitrary use of perspective, are really a part of the process of dematerialization. The admixture of Manneristic features in his style adds piquancy to the transitional Baroque.

Over the whole picture, color throws a unifying mood. The rushing swing of movement is accentuated by color and light. The rhythm of the struggling forms is echoed in the hurrying drift of clouds of the same tones. Darting flaming light adds to the sense of the unearthly and miraculous. Light and dark applied as contrasting foils increase plastic illusion. But in this as in all El Greco's later works, through the very intensity of the contrasts, the chiaroscuro tends to break down. From an element that has no longer the effect of light and shade as defining and elucidating form, it quickens to a life of its own into something which becomes a direct and vivid evocation.



FIG. 11. — GIOVANNI FONTANA. — Laocöon, engraving.



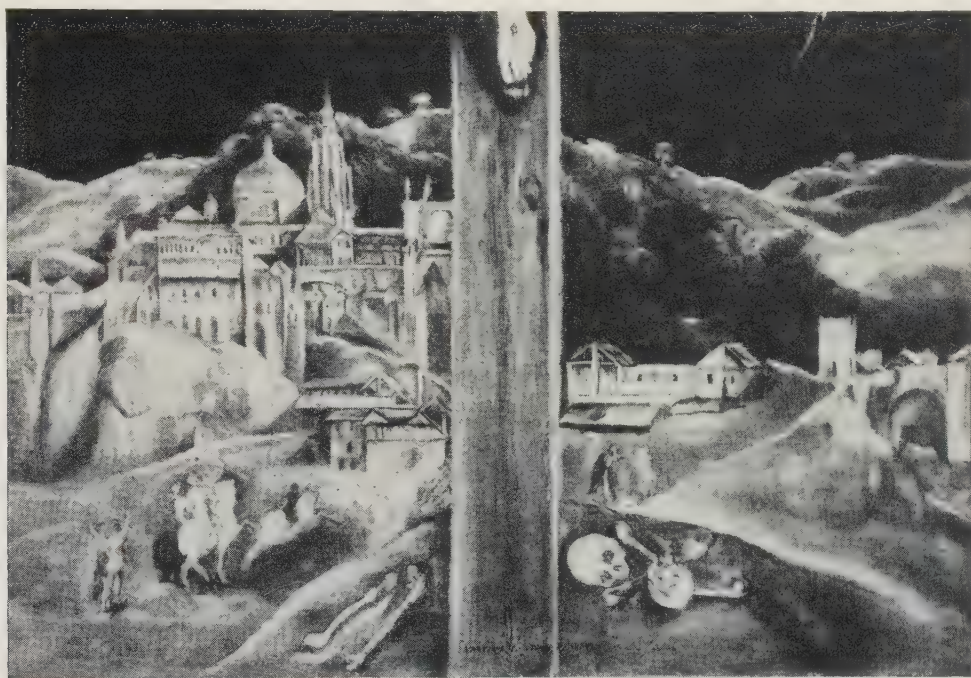


FIG. 12. — GRECO. — Crucifixion with View of Toledo, about 1610. — Art Museum, Cincinnati. (Detail).

So much has been said of El Greco as Mannerist, mystic or Expressionist, that we sometimes forget that in the Capilla Mayor of the Hospital de la Caridad in Illescas, a unique example of an entire scheme of decoration by the artist, he designed what is probably the first complete Baroque *ensemble* in Europe.<sup>11</sup> Baroque is a term which includes a wide diversity of styles and of these, surely that of El Greco was the most individual and original. It is the contrast between what was native to his genius and what he absorbed more or less consciously from his surroundings, that makes him so interesting and gives some clue to the ideas which formed the matrix of his designs. His contemporaries conceived the group as an example of unrestrained Baroque pathos, hence its popularity. They reveled in the poignant and had a distinct preference for the climax to which all leads up, for its dramatic possibilities. To attain better this end, the artist should choose the crucial moment, from which both the preceding and following stages become comprehensible. It is doubtful if El Greco had this in mind — in spite of the instinctive response of Spaniards to the dramatic — nor yet the notion soon equally prevalent that the group should represent three stages of progressive bodily strength as well as spiritual suffering.

Extraordinarily individual as El Greco seems, he was actually not so isolated or so miraculous. He really takes his place as a great exponent of the Baroque in

11. ENRIQUETA HARRIS, *A Decorative Scheme by El Greco*, "Burl. Mag.," LXXII, April, 1938, pp. 154-164.

pictorial art. The exuberance and abandonment of the Baroque are lifted to an almost transcendental plane, and a rhythm elaborated to express extreme emotional states. Formally, a striking element in this was the utmost possible enlargement of the unit of design. The Baroque liked movements which make the limbs so many parts in a single entity, fusing and entwining into a continuous rhythmic whole. This implied emphatic poses to express correspondingly excessive mental states, such as ecstasy, agony — rhetorical poses to convey feeling to the onlooker. The vengeance of the gods upon their priest by means of the destroying power from the nether world, makes this a vivid embodiment of the human predicament. Allegory and literary allusion had been dear to the Mannerists, and Pacheco noted that the Greek was of a philosophical turn of mind. Thus El Greco has reduced the bodies, which have become chiefly vehicles of emotion, to a single cosmic rhythm, to express the unavailing struggle of helpless mortals caught in the toils of fate while the unheeding gods remain deaf to their cries. The Hellenistic Baroque from which the sculpture derived was a late phase in a development and so too, with the artist, this manner was spiritually a termination.

The *Laocoon* is indeed a superb example of El Greco's art when, toward the end of a long career, he had refined away all extraneous elements and had attained a profound sense of abstract form. There is little left here that is merely explanatory or descriptive. Every stroke tends to build up a single vividly-apprehended reality out of an immense complexity of forms. Everything is subordinated to the realization of a single rhythm pervading the whole composition. The movement is emphasized and upheld by the astonishing design of the sky with its sudden luminous breaks upon deep gloom. Light and shade are used quite arbitrarily to stress cadences which seemed best to convey movement. El Greco's principles of emphasis and distortion are the bases of most modern research into the nature of expressive form. Here the master was at the height of his powers, finally fully aware of his personal conception and daring to give it the completest and most uncompromising expression.

1947.

WALTER W. S. COOK.







# EARLIEST AND LATEST WORKS OF GREAT ARTISTS



FIG. 1. — ALBRECHT DÜRER. — Self-Portrait, drawing. — University of Erlangen, Germany.

ANY premature passing of a valuable personality, like that of the much-admired and venerated master in our field of studies, to whom this volume is dedicated, evokes meditations on the futility of human struggles. The problem of frustrated artistic careers has attracted my interest for many years.

At the funeral of Schubert who, more than any other composer is surely the symbol of the musical genius of his native Vienna, the Austrian poet, Franz Grillparzer, voiced the sorrow of her citizens in a single epigrammatic sentence: "With Franz Schubert we bury a rich treasure, but an even greater



FIG. 2. — MICHELANGELO. — Pieta, — Palazzo Rondanini, Rome.

hope." The same melancholy conclusion may be drawn with regard to other artists who died in their prime: Giorgione, Raphael, Watteau. But faced with such an attitude of resignation, the instinctive belief in nature's ultimate wisdom and purposefulness revolts within us: if geniuses such as these passed away so prematurely they must have already given what they were destined to give; thus a vital, accelerated pace had made up for the brevity of their careers.

It is true, that our faith in such a well-planned spiritual world receives a severe blow when we think of the youthful victims of accidents which cannot be considered other than fortuitous. Artists like Jean Frédéric Bazille, who might have lived to be a second Manet, was killed at the age of 29 in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71; Franz Marc was killed in the First World War after having established himself as one of the leaders of the modern movement in art; Giorgione, at the age of thirty-two, fell a victim of the plague in Venice; or closer to our own day, Georges Seurat, at the same age was carried away by a sudden

attack of pneumonia contracted through an unfortunate accident — all these artists can surely have left behind them no more than fragmentary achievements. On the other hand, we remember the many instances of premature death among the romantic poets such as Shelley and Keats; of the host of Austrian and German romantic painters who died in their twenties, and of Richard Parks Bonnington of the British School who died at the age of 27. We compare these prematurely withered blossoms with the great masters of the naturalistic schools: Renoir, Degas, Monet, who reached their seventy-eighth, eighty-third, eighty-sixth year; or the American Winslow Homer, or among the Germans, Adolf Menzel who died at ninety, or Max Liebermann who in 1935 died at eighty-eight and might have lived even longer had the Nazis not made life unbearable for him. In such cases a fundamentally different physical constitution might have resulted in a different artistic



attitude. Those who lived long because of their sound health were inclined to a correspondingly positive interpretation of natural vitality, while the others, by the forewarning of an early death were driven to spirituality or morbidity in their art. Aristide Maillol, going strong up to his death at the age of eighty-two never ceased to pay homage to the inexhaustible vital strength of nature, while Aubrey Beardsley may always have lived under the shadow of a cruel destiny that ended his life at the age of twenty-six.

Such a theory, namely, that to each artist a predestined amount of artistic vitality is allotted, might be confirmed by the observation that some of the romanticists, after a brilliant start, fell into a long period of sterility. Dante Gabriel Rossetti, or among the Germans, Führich and Cornelius, in their later productions hardly ever reached the concentration and fascination of their early works. The same excessive strain that exhausted them, also sapped the vitality of their still more genuine companions who paid for it by premature death.

No such hectic explosion of vital strength poured forth in so short a period and consequently soon exhausted, can be observed in the production of the artists who died in their youth and whose elementary power resulted in lasting developments in art. Théodore Géricault who died at thirty-three left an astounding production, and Masaccio who died at twenty-seven, had already painted the murals in the Carmine which anticipated almost the whole evolution of Florentine art in the XV Century. Nobody can guess to what stature Géricault might have grown, and hence what a different direction he might have given French art of the XIX Century had he lived to be 64 like Delacroix; or what Ma-



FIG. 3. — MICHELANGELO. — Pieta. — St. Peter Basilica, Rome.

saccio might have given to Italian art, and to the world, had he lived to the extreme old age of Fra Angelico or Botticelli. What both achieved was only a very promising start, and their achievements are no more complete than those of the early artists who were allowed to carry their efforts to full maturity. Those who were destined to grow old did not evidence less haste or ardor in their early productions than those who were to die young.

A distinction should be made between two types of artists — those who grew slowly, and those who achieved fame suddenly. The former absorb and assimilate everything their predecessors and contemporaries have to offer them; their superiority manifested not so much in their precocity as in the logical sequence of their maturing. An infallible instinct seems to teach them what they need, and at every step of their way they are entirely at ease. Raphael, Van Dyck, Murillo, belong to this type whose representations seem from the very beginnings to have surpassed all competitors without visible effort. Very different is the spectacle offered by the precocious geniuses. As a boy of fourteen Lucas van Leyden made engravings so bold and original that all his later production in this field looks like mere hack-work. The eighteen-year-old Michelangelo executed that amazing "*Battle of the Centaurs and Lapiths*" which nobody would for a moment hesitate to place in the period of his accomplished maturity if the conditions of its origin — when Michelangelo was still going to school in the Gardens of the Medici — were not so well known. Andrea Mantegna was eighteen years old when he painted the murals in the Eremitani Church in Padua. Albrecht Dürer who as a boy of thirteen had drawn that amazing silverpoint self-portrait in the Albertina in Vienna, produced at the age of 26 or 27 the woodcuts of the Apocalypse, never surpassed by himself or by any other artist, and which in their revolutionary power constituted a radical breach with everything preceding. Now, Lucas van Leyden lived to be 37, Dürer 57, Mantegna 75, Michelangelo 92. Their inspired and inspiring masterpieces are advance payments on the returns of a productive life.

It would seem then, that we must have been wrong in assuming that those artists who died prematurely had given their full share. Their death speaks the cruelty of Mother Nature who destroyed what she herself had so wonderfully and so promisingly created. But in compensation she bestowed on these youthful victims the gift of eternal youth, and turns them into ideals in whom the abundance of eternal life is concentrated. For, in truth, all creative power is a prerogative of the early years; all that the later life of an artist will produce, has its germ in his early work. These early years are fresh, unrestrained and unbiased, unburdened by the artist's later development which cannot but be in part repetition, variation and vulgarization of his original ideas and, therefore, devoid of their initial impulse. In the case of artists who reach normal old age their early work represents a preparatory stage; but in the case of those who died young it repre-





FIG. 4. — REMBRANDT. — The Conspiracy of Julius Civilis. — National Museum, Stockholm.

sents succinct completion. Sunny glamour radiates from the work done by gifted youth, and nowhere is it more fascinating than where no chilly and weary evening tarnishes the splendor of dawn.

The glamour of the early work finds a contrast in the somber glow of the late works of great masters. In their freedom and aloofness they seem to defy all limitation. The ghostly murals executed by the old and deaf Goya in his own countryhouse in Madrid, the glorious *Last Supper* in San Giorgio Maggiore in Venice by Jacopo Tintoretto, of 1594, the latest version of a composition which had haunted his whole long life, or Titian's *Pietà* in the Academy in Venice, found unfinished on the master's easel when he died, almost a centenarian, in 1576 are all greetings from a world lying beyond our own.

Again we must raise the question whether the strangeness of such works may not derive from the extremely advanced age of their authors; that is, whether the mere fact of being very old — just as the fact of being very young — may not produce a mental and artistic attitude of its own. J. J. Brinckmann in his *Late Works by Great Masters* published in 1925, made an attempt to investigate the common features of such productions from a sphere beyond average life duration and beyond average human achievement. He believed they could be found in a prevailing amalgamation, as contrasted with the relativity of earlier stages of life.



FIG. 5. — REMBRANDT. — Self-Portrait. — Museum of Cassel, Germany.

Among the documents collected by Brinckmann on musicians, poets and artists, there is a letter written to Vasari by the octogenarian Michelangelo about the staircase of the Laurenziana Library in Florence, with the design of which Michelangelo had been concerned thirty years earlier. He says: "I enclose for Vasari such information as I can about the staircase of the Library, but the little I can recall to mind is more like a dream than anything else."

No doubt the staircase as executed under Vasari's supervision in 1559 is different from anything Michelangelo planned, or could have planned, in 1524. Its utter freedom, anticipating the revolution in European architecture in the baroque age, is the concentrated result of a lifetime devoted to art. That such a personal experience, which can be gained only by the indefatigable efforts of a long life, is indispensable for

perfection, is supported by the confession of Hokusai who said that only when he was eighty years old, did he begin to understand the very elements of his art: the same idea is expressed by Cézanne who repeatedly insisted that only in his very late years had he begun to grasp what art meant. But it is not this accumulated experience alone which makes the late works of great masters so incomparably fine, but even more, their aloofness, their lack of interest in praise or dispraise by the public.

May I at this point forestall an objection: may not all this pretended superiority of very aged artists be, in fact, the result of decay and exhaustion? The hand no longer faithfully obeys, the brush trembles, and with sincere compassion we note the effects of the prolonged strain which has necessarily worn down the original strength. It may be not only physical weariness, but mental decline as well. The old enthusiasm may have given way to mere skill; constant repetition may have debased



promising inventions to caricatures of their earlier selves. Lucas Cranach, who in his young years was a genuine firebrand, became, in his later years, a rather unpleasant mass producer; and Pietro Perugino extremely gifted when he started, sank, in his old age, to a sorry low level. Especially in successful portraitists do we frequently observe the devastating effects of routine and endless self-repetition.

But it is not such human weaknesses that are in our minds when we discuss late works of great masters, but their very positive qualities. A few of these old artists seem to have been privileged in their unusual faculty of rejuvenescence and of joining succeeding generations in their artistic tasks. Hans Holbein the Elder, whose late *Saint Sebastian* altarpiece of 1516 in Munich has frequently been connected with Hans Holbein the Younger, is an instance of such a faculty. And a still more striking example is Giovanni Bellini who in 1513, the eighty-third year of his life, painted the altarpiece of *San Giovanni Crisostomo* in Venice and in it resolutely placed himself on the level of the younger generation; or, one year later, in the field of mythological subjects, accepted the challenge of his juniors by painting the glorious *Bacchanal*.

Holbein's and Bellini's striking changes occurred during a period in which a great general revolution was taking place in art. The unrest of the times undoubtedly encouraged the transformation in their personal art creed. An analogy



FIG. 6. — REMBRANDT. — Self-Portrait. — Museum of Cologne, Germany.

is offered by the revolutionary epoch at the beginning of our own century, when art underwent a most radical renewal of its foundations, and similar individual conversions were frequent. Numerous artists who had gained moral and economic success while following the older currents, nevertheless felt impelled to join their juniors and to experiment in a new style. The Norwegian, Edward Munch, who at the end of the XIX Century was a typical morbid *fin-de-siècle* master, began after 1910 to express youthful passion and power. At the same time the German, Lovis Corinth, who had established his place among the recognized leaders of the older generation in his country suddenly — after a paralytic stroke which he suffered in 1908 — appeared filled with renewed youthful vigor and ambition.

This phenomenon, which in the above cases may mean only an Indian summer in an artist's life, is, in the case of some of the great patriarchs of art, heightened to a real apotheosis. The years by which they surpass the normal duration of life are endowed with an exceptional solemnity. The great artist has given the world what it might rightfully claim; those last years are his own and nobody else's property. No sense of considerateness need prevent his grandiose self-destruction. Think of Rembrandt's latest paintings: the *Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis*; the so-called *Jewish Bride*; the *Family Group* at Brunswick, probably painted in the last year of Rembrandt's life, and like the paintings mentioned before, a coloristic feast and psychological masterpiece. Compared with them, earlier paintings representing similar subjects pale to insignificance. The artist's interpretation of physical things becomes visionary; exterior existence is vivified by an inner magic. Rembrandt the madman, Rembrandt the failure as a social being, the forgotten artist for whose production contemporaries no longer cared since they did not comprehend them, becomes for us the most valid symbol of the artist proper — as does his Italian counterpart, Michelangelo. In 1550, with his trembling, senile hands Michelangelo then seventy-five years old, formed the *Piétà* now in the Rondanini Palace at Rome (Fig. 2), compared with whose dreamlike intensity the *Piétà* in Saint Peter's (Fig. 3) half a century older, sinks to merely superficial brilliance. It would be preposterous to call this earlier sculpture inferior to the other; it would, moreover, be entirely beside the point to balance their respective merits. What I want to emphasize is simply the fundamental difference in their spiritual structure, and in the early masterpiece the significant lack of that mysterious element, the patina of old age, which only a very long and well-used life can produce. Incomparable productions from two utterly different spheres of life, these works of the very young and the very old master, face each other.

The contrast between early and late works which we have attempted to understand psychologically, may also be approached from a sociological angle. The young artist wants to break through, to revolt against a powerful tradition with which he clashes, to impose himself and his art on the public. The aged artist has grown



indifferent towards the same public which has perhaps already begun to cast its approval on younger artists. The fact of being outdated may grant him an independence which offers his individuality a final apotheosis. From the standpoint of general evolution, these late works of great masters, pathetic and magnificent as they may be, might be called failures. The pageant of art follows the direction given by the middle-aged men.

May I add an amplification of this specific sociological character of the very early and the very late work of art? The former is not only, as mentioned before, the result of an exaggerated urge for independence and originality; it is also linked more tightly than more mature productions

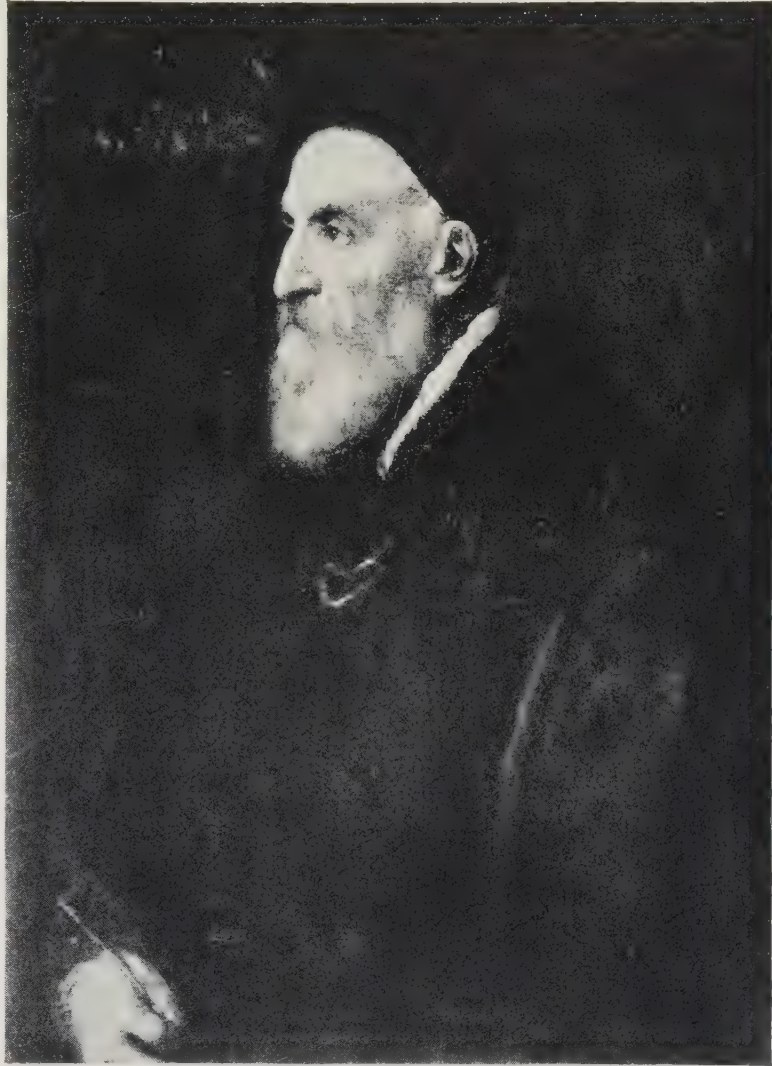


FIG. 7. — TITIAN. — Self-Portrait. — Prado, Madrid.

to the preceding stage of artistic evolution. Even the greatest genius does not emerge from nowhere, but grows out of his natural surroundings. Even the heightened receptibility which enables him to accept numerous stimuli and assimilate many models, is part of his superior talent. Thus there will be a stage in his evolution when his production is very close — close to the point of being confused with it — to that of other artists. In the history of poetry this is common knowledge; literary critics are entirely aware that the great poets share with their contemporaries not only the raw material, but the means of shaping it as well. They know that the boundary line between Shakespeare's early plays and the production of the other Elizabethan dramatists is so faint as to be almost indiscernible, or that the

juvenile lyrics of Dante or Goethe are almost interchangeable with those of their competitors. The impartiality with which they discuss such problems is unfortunately not accessible to the art critics, for the simple reason that the results of their studies are closely connected with financial interests. A poem of Dante, of Goethe, is no more valuable — figured in dollars and cents — than one by a minor poet of their periods, but a painting by Dürer or Titian fetches a hundred times the price of that by a minor, or still worse, by an anonymous artist. Consequently in the field of art we notice an increasing tendency to burden the oeuvres of great artists with productions of doubtful authorship, merely because they present a certain general relationship. It is easily understood why the earliest period of an artist offers the greatest opportunities for such substitutions, the artist at that age not yet having completely developed his own individuality but still participating in great part in the general style of his period. Thus the approach to many great artists has been made most cumbersome in these last decades, by the accumulation of doubtful youthful productions.

Let us now, from the point where the art of the beginner merges into his natural surroundings, cast a glance at the opposite end of the artistic career, where again the production of an aged and successful master is absorbed by his environment. Such a master was not only an individual artist, but at the same time the chief of a commercial enterprise, the head of a workshop the members of which were paid for their share in productions sold under the name and responsibility of the principal. We must not apply the ideas and principles of modern artistry to older periods in which, as far as social standing is concerned, the artist proceeded like any other businessman. To both his credit, and discredit, went what had been executed under his supervision and by his employees. The greater reputation he had acquired, the more the quantity of his output grew, made possible only by the help of assistants. It is, therefore, quite natural that the aged artist, having reached the apex of his fame and, possibly, grown less productive because of his increasing age, should make especially extensive use of his workshop. And again the increase of material value, brought about by the supposed autographical character of a painting or sculpture, induces the art market to blot out the boundary lines separating an artist's personal production from that of his school. Many a great artist's career offers, at its end, the paradox that his production divides into his most intimate creations on one hand, and a lot of workshop paintings in which he had hardly any noticeable share, on the other. Well-informed amateurs of the time were aware of these facts. At the very time when the aged Titian, universally recognized the emperor of Venetian painting, was producing those late works the powerful aloofness of which overwhelms us, his patrons suspiciously inquired whether it was still wise to order from him, since he hardly ever added more than a perfunctory touch to the canvases that left his studio. It may in part have been a



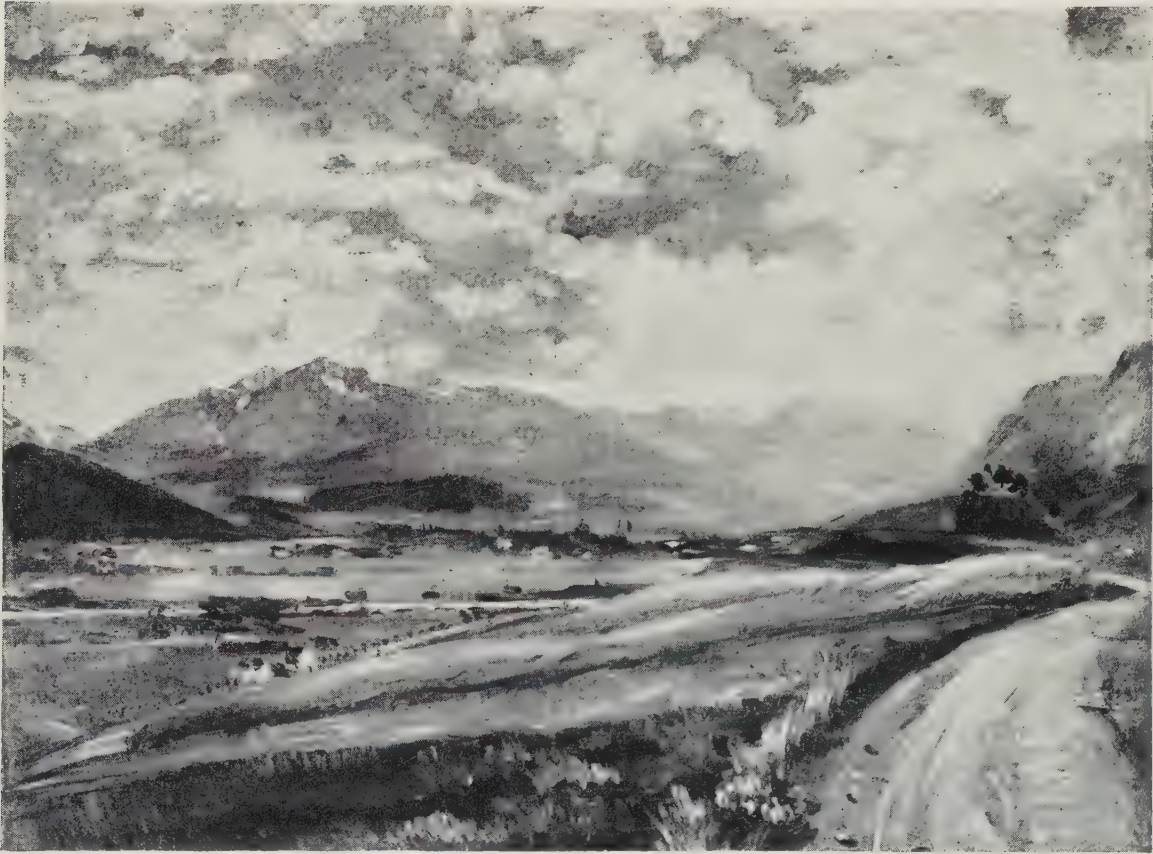


FIG. 8. — LOVIS CORINTH. — Landscape. — Private Collection.

reaction against a routine grown loathsome to him which led Titian and other great men to the contemptuous masterpieces of their latest years.

The very young and the very old artist consequently have this in common: that part of their production loses itself in its surroundings, but another part — the most important and personal one — insists on protesting against these surroundings. There is a point at which the young artist no longer feels the irrepressible urge to force his individuality upon a reluctant and indolent world; and there is a point at which the old master, weary of endless repetitions forced on him by his public, refuses to make any further allowance for its wishes. This “damn the public” attitude of the old masters is as unsocial as the revolutionary outburst of the young geniuses. In both cases predominant emphasis is laid on individual urges, and other people’s needs are hardly taken into consideration. The very early and the very late work transcend the normal conditions of art.

In the center between youth and old age, is the place of mature virility, ready to serve, willing to assume the full responsibility for the intellectual life of a period and, consequently, striving for maximum effectiveness and influence. These goals



FIG. 9. — J. F. BAZILLE. — Men Bathing. — Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (Gift of M. & Mme F. de Salinellas). Courtesy of the Fogg Museum.

can be reached only by a certain amount of self-abnegation. The middle-aged man is less inclined to show off his brilliant originality and less willing to despise other people's individuality; he is more certain of himself and more social than the representatives of the extremes in age. Nevertheless, this stage of artistic power is the most difficult of access to our modern attitude, our conception of art being long since based predominantly on the appreciation of originality. We are all more or less afraid of normality, of general acceptance, of easy accessibility; works

of art which offer these characteristics make us distrustful. Therefore the impulsive egotism of the youth, the indifference of the old man to current opinion, impress us more than the conscious responsibility and longing for social influence that is typical of the man in middle life. The ideal picture of most artists that we have in mind is either a youthful or a senile one. We think of Michelangelo the boy, patronized by the old Lorenzo de' Medici, or of Michelangelo the very old, idolized by the artists of his time; of Rembrandt in the moment of moving from his native Leyden to conquer Amsterdam, and of Rembrandt in the period of his final decay and ultimate triumph. We very often forget the man between those extremes.

January 6, 1945.

HANS TIETZE.





# REMBRANDT

## AND THE GOTHIC TRADITION\*

ONE of the main reasons for Rembrandt's unusual position in the art of Holland was his universal interest in the art and culture of foreign countries and of the past. Rembrandt showed a deep understanding of the modes of artistic expression not only of periods near to him but also of remote ones, which is very unusual for a Dutch artist of the XVII Century. Although Dutch art, due to the economic expansion of the country, was spread over the whole globe, it gave mainly a faithful representation of the native world. The mental realm of Rembrandt's art was different.

Universality of mind does not surprise us in Rubens. He was a scholar, because of his education and surrounding, and enjoyed the intellectual background of international European culture through his travels and connections. But universality of mind surprises us in the Hollander, Rembrandt, who never crossed the frontiers of his country, and whose personal isolation increased in his late years. Although Rembrandt, too, received the rudiments of humanistic education in his youth, he, unlike Rubens, acquired universality less in the intellectual and literary way, than in the intuitive and visual. Ideas were conveyed to Rembrandt

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\* This essay contains results of research work on Rembrandt's drawings done at the Fogg Museum of Art. They were first presented in a public lecture (November 27, 1944) at the Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Harvard University, with whose permission they appear here in print. I am indebted to Dr. ARTHUR BURKHARD who kindly revised the English of the manuscript.

mainly through his eyes, and these eyes were more sensitive to the secrets of artistic form than any others.

Rembrandt could have gained his knowledge of historical forms of art in three different ways. First, he was a very broad-minded collector. His collection embraced works of art from the classical world to the Far East. He collected old masters as eagerly as contemporaries. The artists of the Gothic era and the Renaissance were as familiar to him as Rubens and Callot, Brouwer and Seghers.

Secondly, the flow of art trade passing through Holland was the strongest of Europe at the time of Rembrandt. Amsterdam was practically the centre of the international art trade where works of all regions and periods could be seen. Rembrandt was an "habitué" of the sale halls and shops of the dealers. He was considered as an expert whose opinion was requested in cases of doubtful attribution. Many wealthy Hollanders were collectors like Rembrandt himself who could study their treasures in their houses.

Thirdly, Rembrandt could see many remains of past centuries in his own country. The majority of the old Dutch churches belongs to the Romanesque and Gothic periods. Although Calvinism had deprived them of most of their equipment of paintings and sculptures, there remained enough at portals, in capitals, bosses and choir stalls, to stimulate an artist's phantasy. Catholic enclaves like Utrecht had preserved much of their medieval art. Rembrandt was interested in the medieval monuments of his country, as a little drawing of the Church of St. Mary in Utrecht<sup>1</sup> proves. Many of the old paintings, altarpieces, and cast and carved statues, which were banished from the churches, had found refuge in city halls, charitable foundations, schools and orphanages. Figurative decor in profane buildings remained intact. The traditional sense of the Dutch, being fond of the past, even cherished those old mementos.

These were the sources Rembrandt could draw from. Historians of art have often studied his intimate relation to Italian Renaissance art. He was not only inspired to own creations by the works of the great masters of the Renaissance at different periods of his development, but, with the maturing of his art, he obtained also an inner affinity to them which makes his style seem closer related to the elevated style of the masters of the Cinquecento, of Leonardo, Raphael and Titian, than to that of his contemporaries. One of the finest interpreters of Rembrandt's art, F. Schmidt-Degener, even called him "the last of the great Renaissance masters".<sup>2</sup>

Rembrandt's relation to medieval art has not yet been as systematically

1. Formerly C. Hofstede de Groot Collection. Now Charles P. Curtis Collection, Boston. F. Becker, *Holländische Meister aus der Sammlung C. Hofstede de Groot*, Leipzig, 1923, No. 38.

2. *Rembrandt und der holländische Barock* (Studien der Bibliothek Warburg, vol. IX), Leipzig, 1928, p. 43.





FIG. 1. — REMBRANDT. — Jacob Blessing his Grandchildren. — Museum of Cassel, Germany.

investigated as that to Renaissance art. The points of contact there are not so obvious. Yet Rembrandt's vast interest in the past, his predilection for the old, because it is venerable, mysterious, and filled with a meditative mood, certainly did not overlook the era which had shaped the essential cultural features of his own people, and which was still alive in so many relics around him.

It was again Schmidt-Degener who first drew attention to the fact that Rembrandt in one of his most solemn and beautiful paintings of religious history, *Jacob Blessing his Grandchildren*, of 1656, (Bredius 525) (Fig. 1), was inspired by one figure of a series of Gothic bronzes which were designed by Jan van Eyck and cast by Jacques de Gerines (Fig. 2).<sup>3</sup> Those bronzes, now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, once surrounded as mourners the tomb of Philippe de Mâle in St. Pierre at Lille.<sup>4</sup> Later, they were donated by Philippe the Good to the community of Amsterdam and kept in the City Hall where Rembrandt could study them. They represent Dukes and Duchesses of Burgundy and the Netherlands,

3. *Rembrandt Imitateur de Claus Sluter et de Jean van Eyck*, in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," vol. 36, 1906, p. 89 ff.

4. M.-J. SIX, *Les Bronzes de Jacques de Gerines* in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," vol. 15, 1896, p. 388. MARGUERITE DEVIGNE, *Un Nouveau Document pour Servir à l'Histoire des Statuettes de Jacques de Gerines au Musée d'Amsterdam*, in: "Revue d'Art," Antwerp, 1922.

medieval rulers of the country. It is quite obvious that Rembrandt used the figure of Jacobea of Bavaria, humble and devout in her attitude in spite of the elaborate pomp of the Gothic court costume, for Joseph's wife Asnath. Asnath, filled with silent emotion, is present at the moving ceremony when the blind patriarch blesses his grandsons. Rembrandt not only accepted the general attitude, but even details of the costume, as for example, the Burgundian headgear. He translated the shapely and delicately cut bronze form into his inimitable art of color, making the dark grey and gold of the figure respond to that chord of blue and yellow which began to ascend so gloriously in the paintings of the masters of Delft. There is a soft weaving atmosphere around Asnath, embedding her into the sublime color symphony of the whole and imbuing her at the same time with that sacred and



FIG. 2. — JAN VAN EYCK. — The Dukes and Duchesses of Burgundy. — Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

thoughtful mood which unites the figures in a Rembrandt painting like the *chiaroscuro*. The essential factor is what Rembrandt made from this figure, what kind of spiritual accent it lends to his picture. He used the medieval remoteness and dignity of the model for expressing the mythical distance of a royal figure of Old Egypt which played such a great part in the history of the chosen people. The medieval meant to Rembrandt something shrouded in mystery and sanctified by time. This case is a point of obvious and demonstrable contact of Rembrandt with medieval art. If we deal with the problem, we shall have to base our conclusions first of all on such cases. As Rembrandt was no imitator, but a creative transformer, it has to be anticipated that such cases are extremely rare, even rarer than



the cases of direct influence of certain Renaissance models. They have to be tested through the consideration of what works of art were available and within Rembrandt's reach as sources of inspiration.

That does not mean, that therewith all possibilities of medieval elements in Rembrandt's art were exhausted. As Rembrandt was a creative transformer, the source of inspiration may often be very veiled and secreted in his work. Then, it will be difficult to point out a specific work which acted as a source. The source may rather be suggested than unequivocally identified. We shall have to be satisfied with giving an example instead of putting the finger on the one work which was decisive. Here and there in Rembrandt's work, we shall discover features which are medieval in mood, character and expressive meaning. We can try to explain them by showing analogies in medieval art. But



FIG. 4. — REMBRANDT. — Mourning Mary.  
— Museum Fodor, Amsterdam.



FIG. 3. — REMBRANDT. — Mary Mourning Beneath the Cross, and Several Mourners, sketches. — Buma Collection, Amsterdam.

the way in which they entered Rembrandt's art, may elude our investigation. Those medieval features may have been handed down to Rembrandt through much more recent sources. The medieval tradition was alive in the North much longer than in the South. In the early XVI Century, it interfered with the rise of the Renaissance, especially in the Netherlands. It experienced a revival shortly before 1600.

Iconographical relics of the Middle Ages in Rembrandt's art were investigated by a Dutch scholar, Jonkheer van Rijckevorsel, who, for this purpose, made use also of works of the beginning of the Northern Renaissance, for instance in the case of Rembrandt's magnificent drawing the *Agony in the Garden* (Hamburg), a work of the 1650's. The angel brought the chalice of suffering to the Saviour and the soldiers approach in the background, as we see it



FIG. 5. — REMBRANDT. — Holy Virgin, etching.

the art of the regions, examples of which easily could have come to the knowledge of Rembrandt. Those will be first of all the Low Countries, and the neighbouring or affiliated provinces of France and Germany. In the field of the graphic arts, we have to include also Upper Germany, as Rembrandt's collection was very rich in prints by German masters. We have to extend the time limits as far down as medieval feeling of form prevailed, that is into the beginning of the XVI Century.

A striking example is offered by a leaf of sketches of the late 1630's which represents *Mary Mourning Beneath the Cross* (Fig. 3), drawn with the pen, and several other mourners, drawn with red chalk.<sup>6</sup> The 1630's usually are called the "Baroque" period in Rembrandt's development, yet we find little of the pathetic lamenting and surging movement of the Holy Virgin by Rubens, or one of his pupils, in this Mater Dolorosa who shrouds herself tightly in her mantle and rises

in Duerer's woodcut of the Large Passion (B. 6).<sup>5</sup>

We could extend such iconographical comparisons to the field of allegory. The old medieval idea of the Dance of Death was visualized by Duerer in his engraving the *Promenade* (B. 94) where death lies in ambush for an amorous couple behind the tree. This engraving certainly gave to Rembrandt the idea of his etching *Death Appearing to a Couple from an Open Grave* (B. 109).

But we have to go beyond iconographical features in order to understand how deeply Rembrandt was linked with the medieval tradition. We have to examine also resemblance of form.

It is most appropriate that we investigate for this purpose

5. J. L. A. A. M. van RIJCKEVORSEL, *Rembrandt en de Traditie*, Rotterdam, 1932, p. 53; W. R. VALENTINER, *Rembrandt Handzeichnungen*, No. 454 (*Klassiker der Kunst*, vols. 31, 32).

6. VALENTINER, *Ibid.*, No. 552.



to heaven like a Gothic pillar, one soaring note of grief and pain. The silhouette is angular, and even the pen lines point in sharp angles to heaven. The whole expresses grief which strives beyond itself and sublimates into devotion. Rembrandt indicated the expressive meaning of this figure by a sentence which he wrote on the leaf: "A devoted listening that is kept in a noble heart for the consolation of her trembling soul." Here represented is the listening of the Holy Mother to the last words of Her Son on the Cross. The feeling which the figure conveys is essentially medieval. It is not difficult to recognize in her the mourning Mary who forms a part of the sculptured groups of the Crucifixion high up under the triumphal arches of the Gothic cathedrals, or on the surrounding cemeteries. A figure in the Museum of Cleveland, a work of the Southern Netherlands or the North of France, may stand as an example for many others: Mary congealed to a column from immeasurable pain burning in her heart. From the original plastic imagination, this concept entered the pictorial. So we see the mourning Mary in the grandiose fragment of a water-color painting on canvas by Hugo van der Goes (Berlin, Museum) pressed in the crowd of the mourners around the dead Christ.<sup>7</sup>



FIG. 6. — Burgundian School. — Entombment of Christ. — St. Michel Church, Dijon, France.

There, she crosses the arms in the same attitude which we see in Rembrandt's drawing, as if she would contain an excess of grief in her breast. Rembrandt harks back to Gothic pointedness even in the sharp, abbreviated cut of the features. The medieval grandeur flames up once again at the dawn of the new era in the art of Quentin Massys,<sup>8</sup> a master who was also represented in the collection of Rembrandt. In the painting in the Liechtenstein Gallery, he placed the Holy Virgin, as part of the Crucifixion group, before a vast expanse of scenery, sternly

7. M. J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Die Altniederländische Malerei*, vol. 4, No. 7.

8. M. J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Ibid.*, vol. 7, No. 12.



FIG. 7. — REMBRANDT. — The Mourning Virgin. — Musée des Vosges, Epinal, France.

secluded in her grief as in the mantle which separates her from the beauty of the world. It is the same spiritual accent which Rembrandt's figure incorporates.

Rembrandt drew this sketch at a time when he strove very ardently for expressive values: in the late 1630's. This striving for expressiveness eclipsed problems of naturalistic motion as they occupied Rembrandt in the preceding years. Rembrandt now consciously took up types and forms of Medieval art. Another sketch of this kind is a little pen drawing in the Museum Fodor, Amsterdam (Fig. 4), which represents the half-length of one of the Marys present at the Lamentation for Christ.<sup>9</sup>

She is of a type similar to the Mater Dolorosa. Her haggard features are overshadowed by the mantle drawn over her head. This tight framing of the face, this clenching of the silhouette doubles the expressive potential. She wrings her hands in a gesture of despair. We see the "Medieval" antecedent of this mourning woman in the left part of Rogier van der Weyden's *Lamentation for Christ* in the Hague.<sup>10</sup> Overpowered by grief, she loses her self-control. The lips of the aching mouth part, just as in Rembrandt's drawing.

This conception of the mourning Mary continued to occupy Rembrandt's phantasy until his last period. About 1641, he etched a half-length of the *Holy*

9. Hofstede de Groot, 1218. — KLEINMANN, *Handzeichnungen holländischer Meister*, vol. III, pl. 10.

10. M. J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Op. cit.*, vol. 2, No. 46.



*Virgin* (B. 85) (Fig. 5), appearing behind a parapet on which the instruments of Christ's martyrdom are displayed. She offers them as if it were for pious adoration, while she raises the right hand in an attitude of defence, accusation and compassion. As her look wanders to the right, we supplement her figure in thoughts with a half-length of the Man of Sorrows, a representation very frequent in Late Gothic Dutch painting up to the XVI Century. In a lost diptych by Lucas van Leyden, known from several old copies, the half-lengths of the Man of Sorrows, and the mourning Mary were combined in this way.<sup>11</sup> The parapet with the instruments of Christ's martyrdom seems to have a special meaning. In late medieval French and Netherlandish sculptured groups of the Entombment of Christ, Mary and the Holy Women emerge behind the sarcophagus, holding the crown of thorns, the nails and the ointment jar, or placing them on the edge of the tomb. So we see them in the *Entombment* group of Semur-en-Auxois.<sup>12</sup> Another work of the same kind is the *Entombment* in the Church of St. Michel at Dijon (Fig. 6),<sup>13</sup> where the figures even appear in half-lengths, making the similarity with Rembrandt's etching still more striking. The French works may stand as examples for a type which was in the Netherlands as common as in France.

As most Medieval motives in the art of Rembrandt, also this reached its climax in the late phase. In 1661, the year when Rembrandt painted a whole series of saintly figures in half-lengths, he created the magnificent figure of the mourn-

11. *Sale Erhardt, Schiltigheim*, Drouot, February 16, 1939, Catalogue, No. 8. *The Man of Sorrows* appears in a copy with the monogram GL in the Episcopal Museum in Utrecht. A third copy was recently in dealer's hands, New York.

12. P. VITRY ET G. BRIÈRE, *Documents de Sculpture Française du Moyen-Age*, vol. I, plate 112.

13. HENRI DAVID, *De Sluter à Sambin*, Paris, 1933, vol. I, p. 16.



FIG. 8. — School of Utrecht. — The Holy Virgin. — Archepiscopal Museum, Utrecht, Holland.

ing *Virgin* in the museum of Epinal (Bredius 397) (Fig. 7). Veil and head-cloth encase the face with such severity, that the picture is often called *Portrait of a Nun*. All outer softness and motion is congealed to an inflexible pattern which imprisons the figure like an armour. It is the idea that the rigid structure should contain emotion which is so great that it threatens to disrupt the consistency of form. The feeling of this figure glows out of the darkness of the night which spreads over her, as do the colors in the shining parts of the garment. This glow has a strength that seems to come from inside the painting; the folds of the veil stream like rays of light down to the hands. The masklike seclusion of the face increases the spiritual intensity. It is a conception of ghostlike grandeur.

The late Rembrandt made use of the Medieval restraint of form for increasing the inner expressiveness. Works of Late Gothic art must have been in his mind when he created this extraordinary painting. Figures of the *Holy Virgin* from



FIG. 9. — REMBRANDT. — The Lamentation for Christ. — Wessenberg Museum, Constance, Germany.

Crucifixion groups again offer themselves for comparison. A Dutch example of the late XV Century in the Museum of Utrecht (Fig. 8), remarkably coincides with Rembrandt's work in the general attitude.<sup>14</sup> Such a wood carving easily could have come before Rembrandt's eyes. The almost weird grandeur of expression in the painting makes us think of German works of the great era. Also such came to the Netherlands. I would like to

compare a group in the Church of St. Nicolas at Liège, carved by an artist from the Middle-Rhine at the beginning of the XVI Century.<sup>15</sup> The heroic rigidity of the German work makes it affiliated with the austere gloom of Rembrandt's painting. This reminds us of the fact that Rembrandt had many works

14. WILLEM VOGELSANG, *Die Holzsulptur in den Niederlanden*, Utrecht, 1911, vol. 1, pl. 40.

15. MARGUERITE DEVIGNE, *La Sculpture Mosane du XII au XVI Siècle*, Paris and Bruxelles, 1932, figs. 194 and 197.



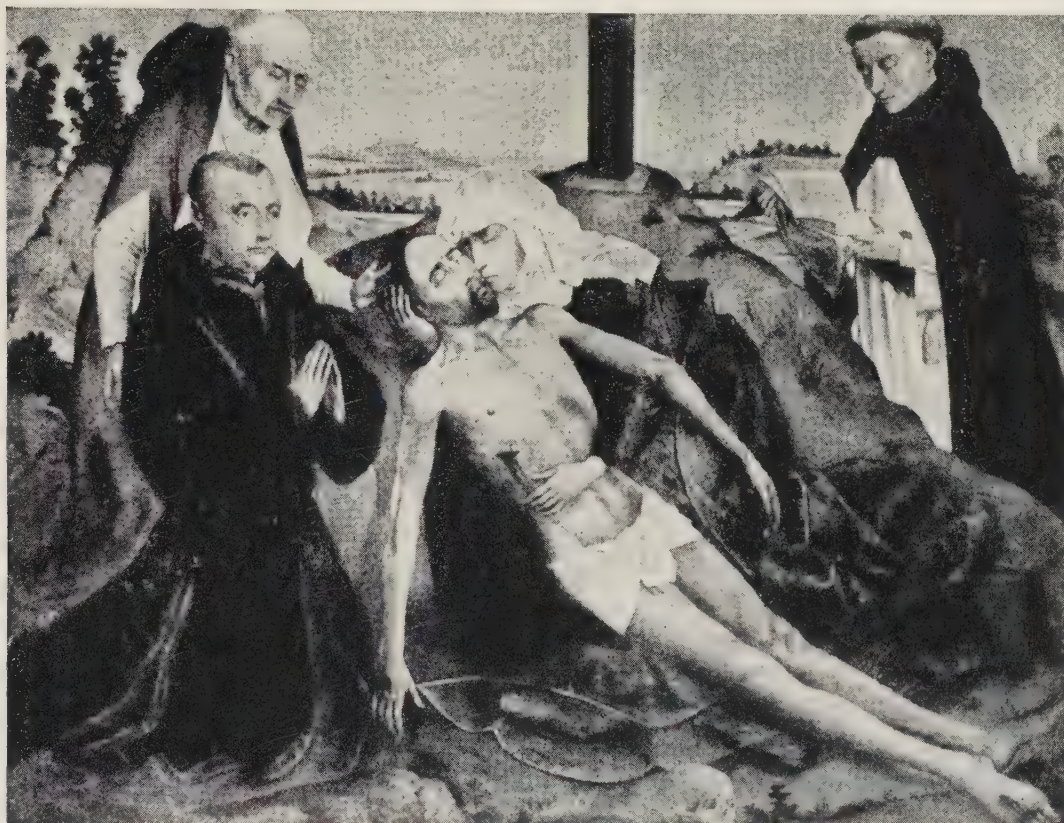


FIG. 10. — ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN. — Pieta. — Earl of Bowis Collection, London.

by old German masters in his collection, among others the engravings of Martin Schongauer. We may imagine that a figure like Mary in the *Crucifixion* (B. 24) found a deep response in the master, especially as it continued a version treated by the Old Netherlandish painters.

While the Mater Dolorosa appears in the mentioned works by Rembrandt in symbolic timelessness, she becomes an exponent of highest dramatic tension in some drawings which represent the *Lamentation for Christ*. It is remarkable how Rembrandt, in order to show glowing devotion and innerness of religious feeling, took up again ideas formulated by Gothic painting. The most obvious points of comparison are offered in paintings by Rogier van der Weyden representing the same subject. The drawing in Berlin,<sup>16</sup> where Mary, in a wild outburst of grief, covers the face of the dead with kisses, takes up the version which we see in Rogier van der Weyden's altar in the Cathedral of Granada (also in the Berlin replica).<sup>17</sup> This drawing was done about the middle of the 1630's, the climax of dramatic motion in Rembrandt's art. The drawing in the Wessenberg Museum, Con-

16. VALENTINER, *Op. cit.*, No. 494.

17. M. J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Op. cit.*, vol. 2, No. 1.



FIG. 11. — REMBRANDT. — Agony in the Garden. — Formerly C. Hofstede de Groot Collection, The Hague.

stance (Fig. 9),<sup>18</sup> belongs to the mature period of the master (beginning of the 1650's). The nervous split of lines is replaced by quiet concentration. The groups are more closed. Mary's mourning loses the cramped, distorted frenzy, but increases in loving intensity. There is no doubt that Rembrandt received inspiration from a composition which we see in Rogier's painting in the Collection of the Earl of Bo-wis, London<sup>19</sup> (Fig. 10).

To the group of drawings from the end of the 1630's, connected with the Passion of the Lord, belongs an *Agony in the Garden* (formerly in the C. Hofstede de Groot Collection) (Fig. 11).<sup>20</sup> The Apostles fallen into deep sleep, are stretched in the foreground like plates of rock. The silhouette of Christ, turned towards the invisible angel, towers steeply up in the background. Several drawings and etchings of this subject by Rembrandt exist, but they all follow a familiar Baroque or Renaissance type of composition, and none shows so strong a Gothic accent as this figure of Christ. The Apostles, embedded into clefts of the terrain, go back to the engravings of the *Passion of Christ* by Dürer (B. 4) which Rembrandt had in his collection; St. Peter and the prostrate Apostle are easily to be recognized in the reverse direction. Yet how much Rembrandt's steep, pointed silhouette of Christ differs from the widely open, pathetic Renaissance pose of Dürer's Christ! We clearly see how Rembrandt tends to "medievalize" his figure. It is in character much more related to the *Christ* of Dürer's Late Gothic forerunner Schongauer (B. 9), also represented in Rembrandt's Collection. There, we see this steep, fervent soaring in prayer. Yet we have not to turn to German art in order to find closely related examples. We find many of them in Netherlandish sculpture of the XV Century, for instance the group carved in stone in the Church of St. Peter in Louvain (Fig. 12). Rembrandt's pen stroke adopted at the end of the 1630's a particular harshness and angularity which lends his figures the character of roughly framed sculptures. This makes the Christ in his

18. VALENTINER, *Op. cit.*, No. 496.

19. M. J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Op. cit.*, vol. 2, No. 20.

20. VALENTINER, *Op. cit.*, No. 445.



drawing so similar to that of the sculpture, even in details as folds of drapery.

As I mentioned before, the Gothic grammar of forms was so deeply rooted in the national temper of the Netherlands that it was not at all eliminated by the beginning of the Renaissance, but, on the contrary, entered various blendings with Renaissance forms, without changing the basic Gothic feeling. At the beginning of the XVI Century, we can observe this phenomenon with Dutch masters of the Schools of Leiden and Amsterdam, the very places of Rembrandt's activity. Jacob Cornelisz van Amsterdam enveloped the figures of his religious woodcuts in waves of exuberant drapery, knowing well the monumental and expressive value of those banked up masses of cloth from sculptures of the time of Claus Sluter. His woodcut of the *Agony in the Garden* in the series of the Large Passion (B. 2)<sup>21</sup> brings out this expressive value as much as Rembrandt's drawing does.

Cornelis Engelbrechtsen of Leiden, the master of Lucas van Leyden, made use of the great flowing, comprehensive silhouette in the way of medieval art for

underlining the contental importance of a figure. So, in the figure of *Christ Taking Leave from his Mother* (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum)<sup>22</sup> everything is subordinated to the great expressive accent of the curve which flows down His back and bends His whole body into one mighty arch, indicating the overflowing affection and loving sympathy of the Saviour for His mother. The same means were adopted by Rembrandt in his etching the *Return of the Prodigal Son* (B. 147), to visualize the same feeling in the father towards his son. Again it was the use of the drapery figure in a particular sense, which achieved the desired effect.

I wish to return to Rembrandt's use of a figure draped in medieval style, and shaped after a medieval model. We saw in the



FIG. 12. — Flemish, XV Century. — The Agony in the Garden. — St. Peter's Church, Louvain, Belgium.

21. W. NIJHOFF, *Nederlandsche Houtsnedden 1500-1550*, S-Gravenhage, 1931, vol. 1, pl. 79.

22. M. J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Op. cit.*, vol. 10, No. 82.

case of *Asnath* in the Cassel painting that such a figure served Rembrandt in his maturity to give an air of solemnity, of remoteness and elevation to a work. So he used medieval types of figures or compositions pre-eminently for religious subjects or scenes, yet occasionally they entered also Rembrandt's art of worldly portrait painting. His knowledge of the Van Eyck bronzes may have fostered his phantasy in creating such figures, yet we have to assume also other sources.

The Albertina possesses a beautiful late pen drawing by the master (Fig. 13), done about the time of the Cassel painting. It represents two women conversing with each other on the road. Their dresses are medieval. The taller and older one reminds of the Mater Dolorosa in the way her head is covered with a veil.



FIG. 13. — REMBRANDT. — Two Women on their Way to Church. — Albertina, Vienna.

The younger one wears a costume very much like that of *Asnath*, with the characteristic Burgundian headgear. It would be hard to guess the meaning of this group if we were not aided by an engraving of the Westphalian master Israhel van Meckenem, mentioned among the artists collected by Rembrandt. Meckenem's prints offer a valuable repository of Gothic costumes and habits. The engraving (Lehrs 499) (Fig. 14) shows a couple on their way to church carrying rosary and prayerbook in a medieval book bag which consists of the parchment of the binding extended beyond the covers. Now we understand the meaning of the objects which the two women in Rembrandt's drawing hold in their hands. It is not probable that Rembrandt had a biblical theme in mind when he made this drawing. Presumably he wanted to create only a genre scene of olden times as he saw them in

Meckenem's prints: two women going to church.

It was a matter of course that figures of that type, inspired by works of Gothic sculpture, painting or engraving, developed into religious representations. As *Asnath* was inspired by the Van Eyck bronzes, so was Mary in a drawing of the *Betrothal of the Virgin* which we know from a copy by a pupil (Widener Collection).<sup>23</sup> Mary appears there as a noble lady in Burgundian court costume,

23. VALENTINER, *Op. cit.*, No. 284.



like Jacobea of Bavaria or the lady at the right. The woodcut in Dürer's *Life of the Virgin* (B. 82) gave rise to the composition of this drawing.<sup>24</sup> Rembrandt exchanged Dürer's figure of the Virgin by one familiar to him from the native medieval art. It is interesting to notice how Rembrandt was often more fascinated by the medieval elements in Dürer's art than by the Renaissance elements because to him they embodied the greater expressive values. From the composition of this drawing developed the painting the *Tribute Money* (1655, Bredius 586). Rembrandt's figures look much more bound and archaic than those of Dürer, and give the impression of cathedral sculptures of the XIII and XIV Century.

On the reverse of a pupil's drawing in the Louvre occur two fugitive projects for a *Visitation* by Rembrandt (Fig. 15).<sup>25</sup> They are full of solemnity and sublimity, proving the master's ability to conjure up a great idea even in the most accidental sketch. The pious devotion of Elizabeth, the humbleness and dignity of the Handmaid of the Lord are indicated in an unmistakable fashion. Again, we could assume a woodcut in Dürer's *Life of the Virgin* (B. 84) as a source of inspiration for such a group, all the more as the same woodcut had promoted the painting of the subject which Rembrandt did in 1640 (Bredius 562). Yet if we compare Rembrandt's drawing with Dürer's print, we notice that the feeling of sanctification is much stronger in the former. The radiant landscape and the majestic pose of the women in Dürer's print speak more strongly than the awe with which an impending miracle fills two pious souls. This awe was much better expressed by an anonymous Dutch master



FIG. 14. — ISRAHEL VAN MECKENEM. — A Couple on their Way to Church, engraving.

24. RIJKEVORSEL, *Op. cit.*, pp. 200-201.

25. F. LUGT, *Inventaire Général des Dessins du Louvre*, vol. III, No. 1305 v0.



FIG. 15. — REMBRANDT. — Two studies for a *Visitation*. — Louvre, Paris.

Walter Gay Bequest in the Louvre and is hitherto unpublished. The main compositional elements are the same in both works, yet Rembrandt has immensely increased the mood of sanctity, of religious foreboding in the late drawing. All elements of Baroque stage-craft are discarded. The figures are rather heavy, blocky, and approach high medieval sculpture more than Late Gothic. The columns become those of a Romanesque porch. The devotion of Elizabeth, filled with awe, is still more obvious in her deep genuflection. As the Lord elevates those who humiliate themselves, she is the one transfigured by a ray of light falling from heaven.

In Rembrandt's late works, the boundaries between religious and profane art fluctuate. As he used elements of medieval art in order to enhance the expressive solemnity of religious representations, so he filled living persons whom he portrayed with the mood of the past, transporting them into a sphere of poetical eleva-

26. M. J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Op. cit.*, vol. 5, No. 42.

of the 15th Century in the shy and constrained gestures of his group which stands nearer to Rembrandt's work not only in spirit, but also in formal character.<sup>26</sup>

Rembrandt even recast the whole idea of the painting of 1640 in a magnificent late drawing of the second half of the 1650's (Fig. 16), contemporary with the previously shown sketch.

It forms part of the



FIG. 16. — REMBRANDT. — The *Visitation*. — Walter Gay Bequest, Louvre, Paris.





FIG. 17. — REMBRANDT. — Portrait of an Old Lady. — National Museum, Stockholm.

tion. In a most subtly and spiritedly painted *Portrait* of 1656 (Stockholm, Bredius 388) (Fig. 17), he represented an old lady in the Gothic dress which we know from religious characters. The costume is familiar from the Van Eyck bronzes. Thus, Rembrandt conjured up the memory of the old burghesses of Flanders as Jan van Eyck and the Master of Flémalle portrayed them: tightly wrapped in their voluminous headgears, the hands folded as if they were sitting in church.

The favorite sport of the medieval aristocratic society was hawking. In tapestries, book illuminations, panels and drawings, we meet the knights and noble ladies who were devoted to it. In a silver-point drawing, a follower of Jan van Eyck portrayed a man in Burgundian dress with the hawk on his arm.<sup>27</sup> Rembrandt had a "tronie", a portrait by Van Eyck in his collection. In one of his most tremendous portraits of the 1660's, the aged master represented a contemporary as a falconer in archaic costume.<sup>28</sup> The pale face shines out of the sombre splendour of a bygone world, the world of chivalry and knightly games, now fallen to dust. He is an errant knight, belonging to an imaginary No-Man's Land.

A contemporary drawing in the Print Room of Dresden is a project for a life-sized hunting scene, where a lady rides out hawking.<sup>29</sup> She is a last descendant of

27. Stadel'sches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt on Main. M. J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Op. cit.*, vol. I, pl. 48.

28. Museum of Goeteborg. A. BREDIUS, *The Paintings of Rembrandt*, London, 1937, No. 319.

29. VALENTINER, *Op. cit.*, 748A.

the noble ladies who ride out to the hunt in the calendar pages of the prayer-book of the Duc de Berry, painted by Paul van Limburg. If Rembrandt's painting had been executed, it would have become one of his most imposing creations. The master cherished the flavor of the world of the past.

In this last period, when Rembrandt increasingly concentrated on the single human figure as a carrier of a tremendous freight of thoughts, he painted many saintly persons, not only Christ and the apostles, but also nameless monks and hermits, praying or meditating. They are embodiments of religious attitudes or moods, often without a definite iconographical meaning. One of the most beautiful is the *Reading Monk* of 1661 (Helsingfors, Bredius 307). A cowl envelops the head—his features sink into anonymity, only slightly illuminated by the reflexion of the leaf. He is the embodiment of religious meditation. In his anonymity, he approaches closely the mourners that in France and the Netherlands surround the tombs of princes, as Philippe the Bold and the Duc de Berry. Those works by followers of Claus Sluter embody the mood of grief, of meditation, of devotion. The men are shrouded in complete anonymity, yet the eloquence of these silent drapery figures is so great that we understand their language better than the weeping of the putti on Baroque tombs. Through hiding and secreting, they reveal all the better—a principle valid also for the art of the late Rembrandt.

A subject and composition, very popular in the Middle Ages, yet almost fallen into oblivion in the era of Rembrandt, was that of the pious knight St. Martin who shares his cloak with the beggar. A painter of the school of Haarlem, a follower of Geertgen tot Sint Jans, represented the Saint as a nobleman,<sup>30</sup> leaving the gates of a city on a graciously ambling horse; he turns round towards the poor man who receives the gift. The twists of figures and horse are typical of the Late Gothic style. Rembrandt, in a monumental drawing of about 1660,<sup>31</sup> interpreted the Saint as a hardened warrior clad completely in steel. We do not know how Rembrandt acquired his knowledge of armour and weapons of the XIII and XIV Centuries, yet he gave them to his Saint who wears a basinet, the helmet of the High Middle Ages. St. Martin halts for a moment on the road, forming, together with the beggar, a massively towering structure which has in its weightiness and simplicity more in common with High Gothic than with Late Gothic works.

We could enlarge upon Rembrandt's relation to medieval art on the basis of many more examples of his late period. For instance, his grandest etching, the *Three Crosses* of 1653 (B. 78), renders the whole Calvary with a variegated crowd thronging around the crosses and milling on the hill. In this way, the Northern masters of the first half of the XV Century interpreted the Crucifixion as an epical mass scene. The altar wing in the Metropolitan Museum, New York,

30. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia. M. J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Op. cit.*, vol. 5, No. 43.

31. Musée Communal, Besançon. VALENTINER, *Op. cit.*, No. 565.





FIG. 18. — REMBRANDT. — St. Albans Cathedral, dated 1640. — Teyler Museum, Haarlem, Holland.

attributed by some scholars to Hubert van Eyck, by others to an early Dutch master, may serve as an example.

In conclusion, I wish to touch upon the work of Rembrandt which is perhaps most thoroughly imbued with a solemn medieval spirit: *The Adoration of the Magi* of 1657 (Buckingham Palace, Bredius 592). Darkness lies over the scene. It is not the darkness of a particular hour, but rather the darkness which reigns unchangingly in the high naves of a cathedral. A ray of light, streaming down almost vertically, illuminates the main group. Its austere ceremoniousness is striking. The old king genuflects deeply before the Infant Saviour. His humbleness is made still more manifest by two chamberlains who follow him and worship in reverent distance. Their parallel figures counterbalance the enthroned Virgin. Restraint and parallelism are familiar features in Old Dutch art. In Geertgen tot Sint Jans' painting in the Oskar Reinhart Collection in Winterthur, Switzerland,<sup>32</sup> two of the Magi kneel down like brothers before the Virgin who does not move out of her stiff reserve. This reserve becomes in Rembrandt's painting the expression of religious awe and sanctification. The lack of outer movement conceals spiritual emotion. The Virgin looks like an idol in her mystical remoteness. The

32. M. J. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Op. cit.*, vol. 5, No. 3.

Eastern figure of the Moorish King with the burning censer crowns the adoration group like a tower. The third king, wearing the crown of an orthodox dignitary, approaches with a gesture of surprise and awe. Schmidt-Degener considered him as inspired by the figure of the Emperor in Van Eyck's series of bronzes. Yet his majesty and solemnity makes him more related to the biblical kings at portals of the High Middle Ages. In their archaic restraint, the figures are as if enclosed between imaginary picture planes. The space in which they move seems to be no earthly one. It is rather related to the ideal space of Byzantine mosaics, with which the painting has also the mystic sparkle of colors in common. It is not impossible that Rembrandt saw Byzantine or Russian icons. Yet such relations evade the proof of an apparent influence because they are too deeply hidden in the essentials of the work of art.

I hope that even this fragmentary demonstration may give an idea how much the Medieval world, the world of the cathedrals and their art, meant to Rembrandt. It was deeply anchored in his artistic consciousness. He was strongly attracted by its austerity and mysteriousness. In 1640, Rembrandt drew a series of English cathedrals, among them a *View of the Cathedral of St. Albans* (Fig. 18).<sup>33</sup> They do not prove a stay of Rembrandt in England, as was wrongly assumed, because Rembrandt did not sketch them from reality. Yet they prove how much those solemn and monumental creations of the human genius occupied his phantasy, not only filling the dream world of his paintings, but also imbuing many of his most sublime creations with their spirit.

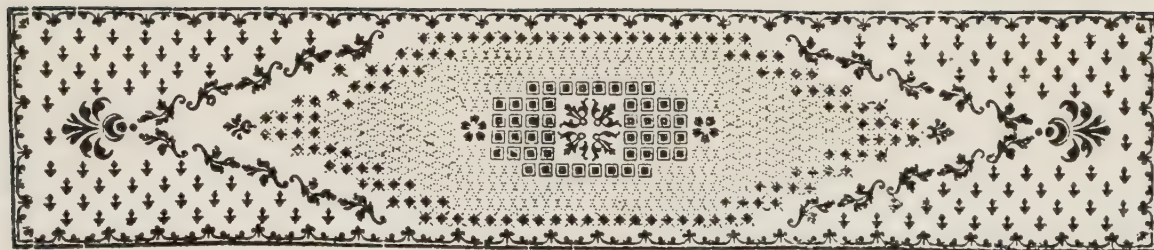
January 6, 1945.

OTTO BENESCH.



33. C. HOFSTEDE DE GROOT, *Rembrandt's reizen naar Engeland*, in: "Oud Holland," 1921, pp. 1 et 59.





# THE EARLY WORK OF CLAUDE LORRAIN

**T**HOUGH the main incidents in the life of Claude Lorrain up to 1636 have long been on record, until recently knowledge of his work before that date has been mainly literary or speculative. Recital of the facts will make this clear. Claude was born in Chamagne, Lorraine, in 1600, and about 1613 went to Rome.<sup>1</sup> There he is known to have worked with Agostino Tassi, though it is doubtful for how long. Certainly, however, he was one of Tassi's assistants in the decoration for Cardinal Montalto of a villa at Bagnaia, near Viterbo.<sup>2</sup> Tassi, a pupil of Paul Brill, the Fleming, was chiefly active as a decorator, covering walls with architectural designs, landscapes, and marine and shipping views; and painted some easel pictures of similar subjects. Claude is said also to have worked in Naples with one Goffredo, who has been identified with Gottfried Wals, a native of the Rhineland, who painted landscapes and perspective pieces.<sup>3</sup> Claude also appears to have had a studio of his own, and to have painted landscapes and architectural views.<sup>4</sup> In 1625 Claude travelled

1. The principal authorities for the life of Claude are SANDRART, *Teutsche Akademie*, 1675, and BALDINUCCI, *Notizie de' Professori del Disegno*, 1684-1728. The editions to which references are made hereafter are respectively those of 1683 and 1847.

2. This appears from a deposition by Tassi, made in 1619, in a criminal trial in which he was involved. See: "Archivio di Stato di Roma, Processi Criminali," LXVII, p. 55 (quoted in: [LADY DILKE] PATTISON, *Claude Lorrain*, 1884, p. 201).

3. The date of this Naples visit is obscure. SANDRART does not mention it; BALDINUCCI, V, p. 89, puts it before Claude was employed by Tassi; D'ARGENVILLE, *Abrégé de la Vie des plus Fameux Peintres*, Paris, 1745, puts it while he was with Tassi; DILLON, *Claude Lorrain*, 1905, thinks it was after this.

4. SANDRART, p. 328

through Loreto, Venice, and Bavaria to Nancy, capital of Lorraine, then a considerable art center. Here he worked under Claude Deruet in the decoration of the Carmelite church,<sup>5</sup> now destroyed. He then returned through Lyons and Marseilles to Rome, arriving in 1627.<sup>6</sup> To the period of Claude's journeyings have been ascribed some drawings of landscape and of ports,<sup>7</sup> but there is no certainty that they are by him.

In Rome he was very soon busy with mural decorations in fresco, in the palace of Cardinal Crescenzo, near the Pantheon; in a house belonging to the Muti family near the Trinità de'Monti;<sup>8</sup> and in a palace belonging also to the Muti, in the Piazza SS. Apostoli.<sup>9</sup> An enthusiastic description by Sandrart of the Muti palace paintings reveals that they consisted of landscapes and marine views. Of all these paintings, nothing is known certainly to survive. Sandrart also speaks of Claude painting little landscapes with buildings, on canvas or wood.<sup>10</sup> That he may have attained some reputation from these is suggested by Sebastien Bourdon having imitated a Claude, and passed the imitation off as by that painter shortly after he came to Rome in 1634.<sup>11</sup>

In the years immediately after his return to Rome, Claude also appears as an etcher. Of forty-four etchings, some are dated: *La Tempête*, 1630; *Le Soleil Levant*, 1634; *Le Bouvier*, 1636; *Le Campo Vaccino*, 1636; a series of firework subjects, 1637; and others later, 1651 and 1662.<sup>12</sup> On grounds of style, however, some of the undated plates may be assigned to the earlier years.

The etching of the Campo Vaccino<sup>13</sup> has special interest, since it represents the same scene as a painting by Claude in the Louvre. This and its pendant, a harbor scene with the sun rising, were painted for M. de Béthune, sent in 1627 from France on a diplomatic mission to Rome, where he negotiated an important treaty in 1629. Lady Dilke boldly assumes that it was in this year or a few years later, that the pictures were commissioned;<sup>14</sup> Dr. Walter Friedländer more cautiously dates them before 1636, the date of the etching of the Campo Vaccino which he regards as derived from the painting.<sup>15</sup> Marcel and Terrasse,<sup>16</sup> however, say that the painting represents the Forum as it was about 1660, by implication perhaps giving the painting to that period.

5. BALDINUCCI, V, p. 89.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

7. DILLON, *Op. cit.*, p. 28.

8. BALDINUCCI, V, p. 89.

9. SANDRART, p. 329.

10. SANDRART, p. 329.

11. GUILLET DE SAINT-GEORGES, *Mémoires Inédits . . . des Membres de l'Académie*, I, p. 88 (quoted in: PATTISON, *Op. cit.*, p. 35).

12. See: ROBERT DUMESNIL, *Le Peintre-Graveur Français*, XI, with supplement by DUPLESSIS, 1871.

13. The name sometimes given to the Forum in Rome, as a cattle market was held there.

14. (LADY DILKE) PATTISON, *Op. cit.*, 1884, p. 36.

15. *Claude Lorrain*, 1921, p. 37.

16. *La Peinture au Musée du Louvre*, I, XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, p. 58.





FIG. 1. — CLAUDE LORRAIN. — Forcing of the Pass of Susa. — Louvre, Paris.

So it was that, until a few years ago, the earliest dated paintings of Claude with which systematic study of his work could safely begin, were a pair in the Louvre, *La Fête Villageoise* and *Un Port de Mer au Soleil Couchant*, both signed and dated 1639. They formed part of a group of four ordered from Claude by Pope Urban VIII, a third painting being now or until recently in the Barberini Palace in Rome, the fourth having disappeared.

A first break in the darkness came in 1931, as the result of careful re-examination of another picture in the Louvre, the *Forcing of the Pass of Susa by French Troops*, 1629 (Fig. 1), one of a pair of small oval paintings on copper of which the other represents the *Siege of La Rochelle*, 1628. This carries a signature and date which had long been read as *Claude in Roma 1651*; but which now appears to be *Gelle 1631R. . .*<sup>17</sup> This date is almost certainly also that of the unsigned pendant.

This discovery provides a useful starting point for consideration; but two recent acquisitions by American museums have put the whole matter on much firmer ground. In 1941 Mr. and Mrs. Edsel B. Ford presented to the Detroit

17. H. WEIZÄCKER, *Die Anfänge des Claude Lorrain*, in: "Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst," LXI, 1930-1931, pp. 25 sqq.



FIG. 2. — CLAUDE LORRAIN. — Evening. — Institute of Fine Arts, Detroit, Michigan.

Institute of Arts a landscape, *Evening*, which is signed and dated *Claudio IV 1631* (Fig. 2).<sup>18</sup> In 1944 the Boston Museum acquired *The Mill* (Fig. 3), which is also signed and dated in the lower left corner *Clav..E IV 1631* (Fig. 4). This painting, from the Collection of Sir Berkeley Sheffield, Normanby Park, Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire, was sold at Christie's on July 16, 1943, No. 40. Probably owing to the dirt and old varnish which covered the picture, the signature was misread as a monogram of Cornelius van Everdingen, under whose name it appears in the sale catalogue. Though virtually out of sight for more than a hundred years, it was recorded in 1837 in Smith's *Catalogue Raisonné*, part VIII, No. 409, where it is entitled *The Mill*. Smith states that with a companion piece, *A Hunting Party*, it was then owned by Woodburn, the London dealer, and that both were said to have come "from the country mansion of the Count de Bouillon." No Comte de Bouillon is traceable; but this may be a reference to the Duc de Bouillon, one of Claude's most important patrons.

The Boston painting closely resembles drawing No. 22 in the *Liber Veritatis* (Fig. 7), the most important differences being the omission in the drawing of

18. Oil on canvas; 30¾ x 45½ in. From the Collection of Lord Grenville, Dropmore, Bucks. Reproduced, fully described, and analysed in the "Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts," XX, no. 7 (April 1941), by Mr. E. P. RICHARDSON, to whom I am much indebted for a photograph and for permission to reproduce it.





FIG. 3. — CLAUDE LORRAIN. — The Mill. — Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass.

the artist and his friends, of the baulks of timber on the shore, and of the goats in the right center foreground; and the greater prominence given to the man milking the goat. On the back of the drawing is the inscription *Claudio fecit in V.R. Napo*; and in the list of contents it is described as "Per Napoli 22." It should be noticed, however, that Smith, under No. 22 in his catalogue, describes a picture, *Peasant Milking a Goat*, which agrees with the drawing in the very points in which it differs from the Museum's painting. Probably, therefore, the *Liber Veritatis* drawing either records or is a sketch for the *Peasant Milking a Goat*, whose whereabouts was unknown to Smith; and the Museum painting is an adaptation from either the drawing or this painting.

The setting, however, was evidently a favorite one with Claude, since it appears in *Liber Veritatis* No. 123, with a wholly different foreground (Fig. 5).<sup>19</sup> It is also seen, with variations in the trees to the left and with a different foreground, in the etching, *La Danse au Bord de l'Eau*, one of Claude's earlier etch-

19. The painting related to No. 123 was made for Signor Toretti and was in the Northbrook Collection until recently.

ings (Fig. 6).<sup>20</sup> The over-shot mill on the right appears again in *Liber Veritatis* No. 11, and in the picture connected with it<sup>21</sup>.

The mere fact of the Detroit and Boston pictures being dated eight years before the earliest dated picture known hitherto, is not in itself important. But considered together, they throw much light on Claude's beginnings. Mr. Richardson very justly says of the Detroit picture:<sup>22</sup> "It is a record of the young artist's delight in the beauty of the countryside near Rome, in whose soft sunlight and noble

perspectives of river and mountain he was discovering the purpose of his life;" and later: "It is at once more lyrical and more realistic than the later works we are familiar with. Although the tone of revery and pastorage and the highly conscious composition of light are already there, there is a simplicity about the picture that has the quality of direct personal experience." These words also aptly describe the Boston picture, in which, however, the note of reverie and of pastoral sentiment is less marked, while the realism is more evident. Both paintings witness Claude's interest in evening and early morning light, which Sandrart says was manifested in his work as a young man.<sup>23</sup>



FIG. 4. — CLAUDE LORRAIN. — The Mill. — Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Mass. (Detail with signature, see Fig. 3.)



FIG. 5. — CLAUDE LORRAIN. — *Liber Veritatis*, No. 123.

It is this grafting of lyric sentiment, feeling for light and air, and realistic treatment in detail onto the tradition of classic Italian landscape, exemplified by the work of Annibale Carracci and Domenichino, which gives Claude his characteristic quality. In his later work imagination fuses all the elements more

20. ROBERT DUMESNIL, *Op. cit.*, XI, p. 167.

21. SMITH, No. 11. Then (1837) in the Collection of Samuel Rogers.

22. "Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts," XX, 68.

23. SANDRART, *Op. cit.*, p. 328.





FIG. 6. — CLAUDE LORRAIN. — *La Danse au Bord de L'eau*, etching.

completely, and brings into being a more highly personal art; but we know now that all the elements are present in his early work.

Claude's early life indicates whence these elements derive. It is often forgotten that as a native of Lorraine, Claude was not born into the French tradition in the same way as was Poussin, a Norman. Rather, he was heir to

the art of Burgundy, so closely affiliated with the art of the Netherlands. The chief importance of Claude's connection with Tassi seems to have been the opening of a channel for the influence of Brill, of whom Tassi was a pupil. Authenticated easel paintings by Tassi are rare; and as a landscape painter he is best seen in the series which forms a frieze in the Doria-Pamphili Palace, Rome, in which the influence of Brill is dominant.<sup>24</sup> Brill himself, however, lived until 1626, so that Claude would have had the opportunity of direct contact with him. Certainly the influence of Brill, direct or transmitted, seems to be uppermost in the Detroit picture. The group of trees to the left, their tops cut off by the edge of the picture, the feathery leaning saplings, and the angular sequence of planes swinging into the distance, are all part of the Flemish formula in the

24. To Tassi has also been attributed a *Campo Vaccino* (Paris, Private Collection), from which it is suggested that Claude derived his etching and/or painting of the subject. (Cf. HESS, *Agostino Tassi*, 1935, p. 32. repr.) The attribution to Tassi is not convincing, and does not justify assumption of direct borrowing by Claude.



FIG. 7. — CLAUDE LORRAIN. — *Liber Veritatis*, No. 22.

treatment of landscape, which found its apotheosis in the work of Rubens. Flemish in inspiration, too, may be the blue mountains and distance, and the subtly handled sky lit by the evening sun. These last two characteristics link the Detroit and Boston paintings. Otherwise the *Mill* suggests a different exemplar. The rounded tree shapes with the foliage in clumps, and the composition with the clump of trees forming a bold vertical mass on the left, contrasting with marked horizontal emphasis elsewhere, and serving as a foil to a series of planes in recession parallel to the picture plane, all suggest the influence of Elsheimer. Claude could have had no direct contact with Elsheimer, who died in Rome in 1610. But Elsheimer lay behind Brill, and was a powerful influence on all landscape painting in Rome in the first quarter of the century.

In Claude's *Forcing the Pass of Susa*, in the Louvre (Fig. 1), the treatment of the trees and their foliage, and the organization of the design, also owe something to Elsheimer. But this picture raises a still more interesting problem concerning Claude: as to who painted the figures in his pictures. Baldinucci<sup>25</sup> says



FIG. 8. — CLAUDE LORRAIN. — *Liber Veritatis*, No. 11 (detail).

“that he was wont to say that he sold the landscape, and gave away the figures;” and also “*per una certa sua natural bontà e continenza*,” it did not annoy him if whoever had commissioned landscapes or marines had the figures added by another hand; which was usually done by Filippo Lauri. Lauri was born in 1623, so any work he did must have been on Claude's later paintings. Also this is the

one specific reference by a contemporary to another painter putting figures into Claude's work, though later writers mention in this connection Nicolas Colombel (1644-1717), Jacques Courtois (1621-1675), or his brother Guillaume (1628-1679), and one Angeluccio, said to have been a pupil of Claude. Again, their activities could only relate to Claude's later work. As regards his earlier work, attribution is the only guide. For example, Dr. Valentiner makes a very good case for Pieter van Laer's authorship of the figures in a painting of *Blind Man's Buff*, attributed to

25. BALDINUCCI, V, p. 92.





FIG. 9. — Magnifying three diameters raking light from a detail of the *Mill* (see Fig. 3).

artists. Painting does not readily admit of partnership.<sup>26</sup> Claude is by no means so incompetent a figure painter as his critics try to make out. The figures and animals which appear in the *Liber Veritatis* and in the etchings (all of them indubitably by Claude himself) are entirely adequate for their purpose; and the same holds good for most of the paintings. The *Mill* is a case in point. The figures still have a tang of Callot. But in arrangement, tone, and paint quality the figures

Claude, in the Detroit Institute of Arts,<sup>26</sup> while Dr. Walter Friedländer<sup>27</sup> suggests that the figures in the early *Seaport* in the Louvre may be by Jan Miel, a pupil of Pieter van Laer.<sup>28</sup> To these examples of possible collaboration, the Louvre *Susa* may safely be added. The figures have a variety, vivacity, and precision unlike any of those by Claude; and the view of Louis Hourticq<sup>29</sup> that they may be by Callot, or from a drawing by him, is very reasonable. Callot was also a native of Lorraine and was working in Nancy for the Duke of Lorraine when Claude was visiting that city.

Generally, however, the attribution of Claude's figures to hands other than his own has gone far beyond the boundaries of knowledge and common sense. John Constable, with a painter's perception, puts the connoisseurs in their place: "Claude's own figures always accord better with his scenes than those sometimes introduced for him by other



FIG. 10. — Magnifying three diameters raking light from a detail of the *Mill* (see Fig. 3).

26. "Bulletin of the Detroit Institute of Arts," XXI, 58 sqq. Partly on a dating of the figures, DR. VALENTINER dates the picture 1625-1627.

27. *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

28. It may be pointed out, however, that the figures in *Liber Veritatis* No. 10 are very similar to those in the painting, and are certainly by Claude himself.

29. *Claude Lorraine et Jacques Callot, Mélanges Bertaux*, 1924, pp. 150 sqq.

30. Lecture at the Royal Institution, 1836.



FIG. 11. — X-Ray foreground of the *Mill* (see Fig. 3).

details of the foreground (Fig. 11). Thus, in a comparatively early work, Claude proves himself quite capable of putting adequate and satisfactory figures into his paintings. The literary evidence for extensive use of collaborators is not convincing, and Claude's own joking remark about giving away the figures is no evidence one way or the other. Evidently the whole question needs reconsideration in the light of study of the paintings themselves.

The figures in the *Mill* have another interest. In the left foreground is an artist at work with two companions standing by. This is perhaps a reminiscence of such a sketching tour as the one to Tivoli described by Sandrart, made by Claude, Sandrart and others.<sup>32</sup> The artist is working with a pencil or brush, apparently on paper supported by some kind of portfolio. Sandrart<sup>33</sup> speaks of Claude accompanying him into the country to draw from nature "*in qua tamen Artis parte, favore Naturae satis utebatur exiguo.*" Yet he says that Claude had an exceptional gift for painting from nature, and that he and Claude, instead of drawing with black chalk or tinting with the brush, painted on prepared paper or canvas direct from nature. None of these oil sketches by Claude is known to survive; while "in the art in which he enjoyed small favor from Nature" — drawing in chalk or wash — he has left a superb and unrivalled series, one of which perhaps he is making in the *Mill*.

W. G. CONSTABLE.

31. Photographs by raking light, magnified three diameters.

32. SANDRART, p. 306 (*Life of Peter de Laer*).

33. *Ibid.*, p. 25 (*Instruction on Landscape Painting*).

January, 1945.

and animals are completely integrated with the rest of the painting. Comparison of the goats with those in *Liber Veritatis* No. 22 (Fig. 7), or in *Liber Veritatis* No. 11 (Fig. 8) leaves no doubt that these are by Claude; and comparison of the figures and the goats in the painting shows that they are by the same hand (Figs. 9 and 10).<sup>31</sup> X-ray photographs confirm this evidence, and also reveal that the figures and animals are painted over the



# THE CHAPELS OF THE CHÂTEAU OF VERSAILLES

A LONG prehistory antedates the celebrated existing Chapelle Royale at Versailles. The late Pierre de Nolhac, in his writings on the château, listed no less than five successive chapels there.<sup>1</sup> Relatively little, however, has been known of the artistic form of the earlier ones, which we seek here to reconstruct. On the design of the present chapel itself, also, we offer an initial chapter, hitherto unpublished.

The oldest known plan showing the interior arrangement of the château of Versailles, the only one prior to the first changes made by Louis XIV, is one discovered by M. Alfred M. E. Marie in the unclassified drawings at the Cabinet des Estampes.<sup>2</sup> This "*Plan du premier Estage*," which does not name the rooms, but which does indicate the position of beds, nowhere gives any indication of an altar. The same is true of the plan of 1667 engraved by Silvestre, showing the first minor changes of Louis XIV. Nolhac stated in 1925<sup>3</sup> that the chapel of this old Petit Château was in one of the corner pavilions, and this was true, as we shall see. He went on, however, to identify the location as on the site of part of Vestibule 46 of

1. *La Création de Versailles*, 1901 ed., pp. 110, 225-226; 1925 ed., pp. 188-189; *Histoire du Château de Versailles*, 1911, I, pp. 126, 214; II, pp. 13-16, 212ff; *Versailles, Résidence de Louis XIV*, 1925, pp. 21-26, 336ff; *La Chapelle Royale de Versailles*, n.d.

2. A tracing of this plan, still unpublished, was kindly communicated to me by M. Marie by letter of January 5, 1940.

3. *Création*, 1925 ed., 188n.

the Museum. This would imply that it had been in the southwestern pavilion, an implication which we shall find is erroneous.

At the time of LeVau's construction of the Château Neuf, beginning in 1668, the eastern pavilions of the old Petit Château were extended to the east by wings of three bays and a new pavilion, masking the new stairways of the King and Queen. There exists a section of about 1671 by Dorbay (Fig. 1)<sup>4</sup> taken through the wing on the northern side, showing the treatment intended for the Escalier du Roi and of the Salon in the Château Neuf at its head (the future Salle de Diane). Here the wing is marked "*Profil du pavillon où estoit la chapelle.*" The first chapel, accordingly, had been in the northeastern of the four old pavilions.<sup>5</sup> We know nothing whatever of its treatment or decoration; in the accounts of 1670 we find an entry for a new stucco cornice "*dans la pièce où estoit l'ancienne chapelle de Versailles,*"<sup>6</sup> and in 1671 for laying a marble pavement "*dans la chambre où estoit la chapelle du Roi*" (I, 512).

Le Vau's plan for the Château Neuf, as executed,<sup>7</sup> provided a new chapel at the southeast corner, on the site later occupied by the Salle des Gardes de la Reine. Its internal finish was included in the budgetary provisions for 1671 and 1672 (I, 486, 587), and it was consecrated October 30, 1672. The room extended through two stories, with a tribune at the level of the royal apartments.

It was after the death of Le Vau in 1670 that the determination was taken to extend the north and south sides of the Château Neuf to fill in the recesses there existing, thus providing on the north for a more monumental treatment of the Grand Escalier du Roi, on the south for a more adequate chapel, both initially on plans by Dorbay. In both instances the decorations were later restudied by Le Brun; we find payments in 1675 to the painter Anguier for drawings after Le Brun for the stairway and for drawings for the chapel (I, 829). In December 400 livres were paid for a model of the chapel in wood (I, 827, 831). This chapel, the third, occupying the space which later provided for the Grande Salle des Gardes, was executed in the years 1676-1679. The enlargement of the Escalier de la Reine, undertaken in 1680, was made possible by the abandonment of the second chapel, but was clearly not the reason for it as Nolhac supposed. The financial provisions for 1676 included 60,000 livres "*pour les ouvrages à faire dans la chapelle pendant la présente année*" (881); those for 1677 included 12,000 "*pour achever la sculpture du fronton de la chapelle, faire les trois bas-reliefs au-dessus de la grande corniche du dedans*" (936). The sculpture of this pediment was by Le Gros and Le Hongre; Lespingola

4. Bibliothèque de l'Institut, Mss. 1307, no. 101, of which photographs were kindly secured for me by M. Marie.

5. Nolhac's belief that the first chapel was on the southern side of the château was doubtless due to his erroneous supposition that this drawing, which he came to know, showed the Escalier de la Reine and the chapel of 1671-1676.

6. *Comptes des Bâtimens du Roi*, ed. by J. GUIFFREY, 1881ff, I, p. 419.

7. When NOLHAC wrote (*Création*, 1901 ed., p. 225) of finding along with the original of this plan among the papers of Le Brun at the Louvre, "*les plans de la chapelle de la même époque,*" what he refers to are really the plans of 1683-1684, there preserved, which we discuss below.



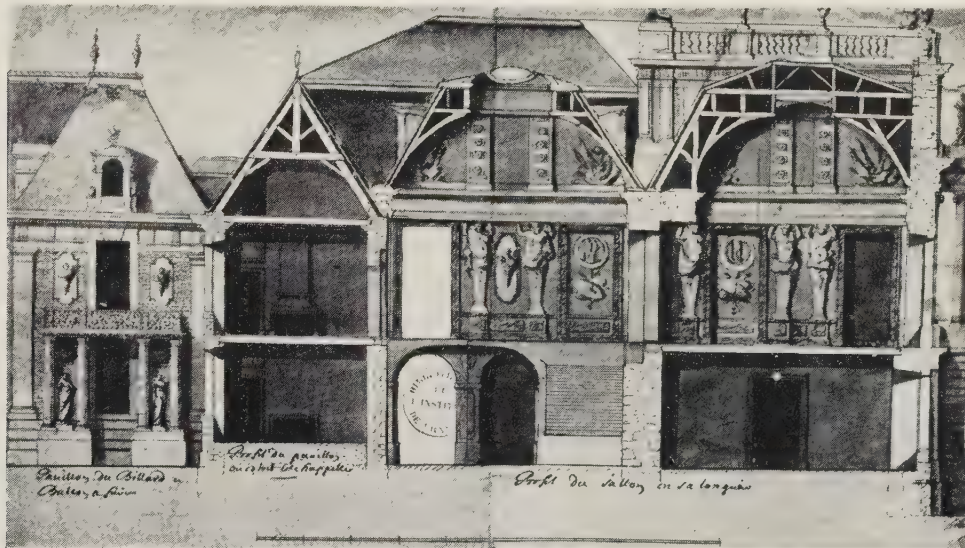


FIG. 1. — FRANÇOIS DORBAY. — Section of the North-East Pavilion of the Petit Château, about 1671.

made the reliefs below the pediment; Tubi, the bronze bases for the columns inside (963, 965). We learn from the budget for 1678 (1014) that there were eight of these columns, of red and white marble; and sixteen pilasters; that on the cornice there were to be six figures of angels. The capitals of the columns were of lead and pewter (1050), and there was a payment of 2000 livres for marble work (1051). In 1679, 35,000 livres was allowed for "*les ouvrages de stuc et peinture de la chapelle, anges et figures bronze doré et autres ornements*" (1114), but it would seem that these expenses were not incurred, as it was already obvious that this chapel, which had been intended to be definitive, must be abandoned. Meanwhile it was evidently in use, for we find payments of June 11 to September 11 "*sur la sculpture de la corniche de l'endroit où étoit la chapelle,*" now become the Salon de l'Appartement de la Reine (Salle des Gardes de la Reine).

The decision to house the Court in the château necessarily required the displacement of this chapel, through the area of which one must pass to reach the new Aile du Midi. A first idea, hitherto unnoticed, was to provide a chapel on the ground floor, in the area of the Cabinet des Bains. There is a reference number: "2 la chapelle," at this point of the façade in Pérelle's engraving *Le château de Versailles ainsi qu'il se voit en cette présente année de 1680*.<sup>8</sup> The new one, itself provisional, was provided to the north, filling in the space between the wing of the forecourt and the old Grotto of Thetis, on the site of the future Salon d'Hercule. The budget for 1681 provided 30,000 livres "*pour le bâtiment à faire pour servir de chapelle*" (II, 5). The shell was begun in May. Designs survive at the Archives Nationales (o<sup>1</sup>1783) and are here published for the first time (Figs. 2 to 6). The

8. Reproduced by NOLHAC, *Création*, 1901 ed.

first study, dated June 22, 1681 (Fig. 2), shows a very low-ceiled gallery, segmental arches above and round arches below. The gallery or tribune is carried around on the side toward the château, at the level of the wing of the forecourt; the altar backs up to the wall of the grotto. This drawing already bears a form of approval for Colbert with the day of July left in blank, but he did not sign it. An alternate flap pro-

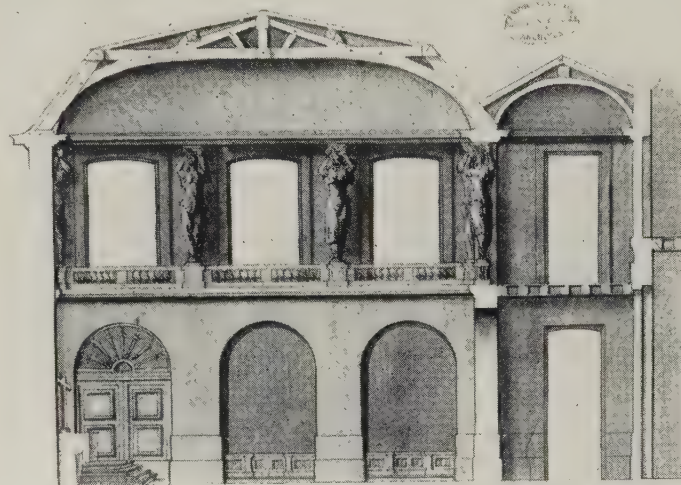


FIG. 3. — Second study for the Chapel, 1681.

poses to increase the height of the gallery and support the cornice on caryatids. This evidently met Colbert's approval, as it was embodied in a new drawing (Fig. 3) which bears his signature and the date, July 26. A detail of the sacristy door, still with a semi-circular arch (Fig. 4), is dated September 1. Nevertheless the design of the chapel was further modified. The final drawing (Fig. 5), corresponding to the executed work, shows winged herms instead of the caryatids, and substitutes elliptical arches below.



FIG. 2. — First study for the Chapel, 1681.

A further drawing of the set at the Archives Nationales (Fig. 6) gives the design for the "*deux oratoires de menuiserie faits pour la Reyne dans la Tribune de la chapelle,*" for which the accounts record payment to Rivet on November 1 (II, 212), and which appear in Pezay's painting of the interior, corbelled at the southern angles of the tribune. This fourth chapel was dedicated in May, 1682, and, contrary to all expectation, was to remain in use over a quarter of a century.

As executed, it appears in



the painting by Antoine Pezay at the Museum of Versailles (Fig. 7). Nolhac stated more than once that "*beaucoup de morceaux d'ornementation se trouvèrent prêts, ayant été commandés dès 1678 pour la chapelle précédente . . . On y retrouve en effet les figures d'anges, les colonnes, les pilastres.*"<sup>9</sup> In this, however, he was mistaken. The angels for the preceding chapel were to have been "*sur la corniche,*" its columns were of marble; the winged figures in the new one were herms serving as columns. We find on August 23, 1682 a payment to the sculptors Mazeline and Jouvenet "*sur les quatre figures . . . de bois qu'il font pour la chapelle*" (III, 197).

The earliest projects I know showing the Aile du Nord appears on the engraved *Plan général du Château et du petit parc de Versailles. Dessigné et gravé par Isr. Silvestre en 1680*. This shows the wings in their future position but wholly detached from the château, the Aile Nord having only its southernmost block returning toward the east, where it masks the reservoirs which still occupied much of the site there. The payment to Silvestre for engraving this plate was made on December 15, 1680 (II, 1346). No suggestion of a

9. *Ibid.*; *La Création de Versailles*, 1924 ed., 189n; *Versailles, Résidence de Louis XIV*, 1925, p. 21.



FIG. 4. — Detail of the Sacristy Door (see Fig. 3).

chapel which might have risen into view behind the façade of the wing appears in the medal *Regia Versaliarum MDCLXXX*,<sup>10</sup> in the pen drawing by Silvestre showing the château and the Parterre d'Eau in 1682,<sup>11</sup> or in the engraved *Vue du château de Versailles et des deux aîsles du costé des Jardins. Dessigné et gravé par Isr. Silvestre en 1682*.

Subsequent projects for the Aile du Nord envisaged a monumental chapel half-way down its length, between its two interior courts, and fronted by the central pavilion of the wing. There it appears in a large engraved plan of the wing preserved at the Cabinet des Estampes,<sup>12</sup> where it is accompanied by a whole series of sections and elevations engraved by Le Blond (Figs. 12 and 13, cf. Fig. 8). At the period concerned this would be Jean Le Blond, father of Jean-Baptiste Alexandre. We may assume with great assurance that these plates were being engraved in 1684. Le Blond does not appear at all in the accounts of the Bâtiments before 1683, when he was paid for plates of the Orangerie and of the aqueduct of the plain of Buc. The next entries are of January 30 and March 26, 1684, "*pour plusieurs planches qu'il a gravés pour le service du Roy, 1282 livres 5 sous*" (II, 541), and of April 1, 1785, "*à compte des plans et élévations qu'il a gravés, 1000 livres*" (785), with no further payments until 1687, "*à compte des planches qu'il a gravées de la grande aile et de l'avant cour du château de Chambord, 1000 livres*" (1194). Construction of the Aile Nord at Versailles had meanwhile been begun in December 1684 (414).

Jacques-François Blondel, in his account of the chapel has a passage<sup>13</sup> referring to its earlier history and to these engravings which has led to many errors. He says first:

*"Longtemps avant que cet architecte [Hardouin Mansart] eût entrepris la construction de cette chapelle, plusieurs autres avaient été chargés de donner des projets; Claude Perrault même avait reçu ordre d'en composer pour la décoration*

10. Illustrated in: *Création*, 1901, p. 262. This, which is in bird's eye view, shows at the center of the north wing, as at the ends of it, merely a narrow straight block running eastward.

11. *Ib.*, 151.

12. Va448b, format 6.

13. *Architecture Française*, 1752, IV, pp. 756, 139-140.

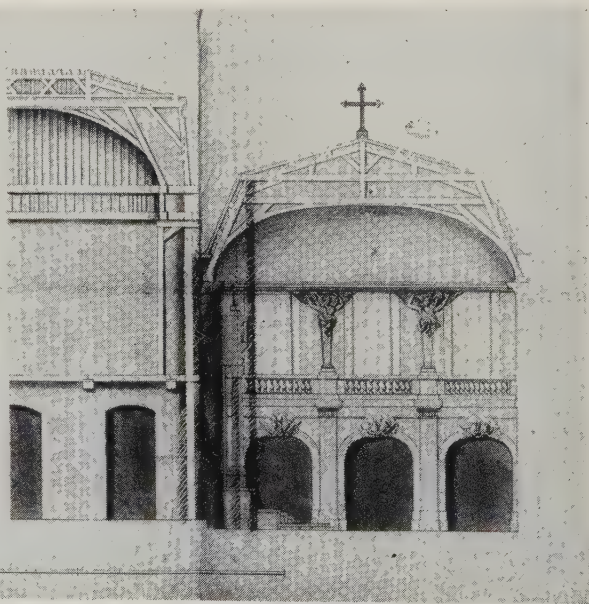


FIG. 5. — Final design for the Chapel, 1681.



*intérieure de l'ancienne chapelle érigée lors des premiers bâtiments de Versailles, du temps de Louis XIII. On voit les dessins qu'il avait faits à ce sujet, dans le premier volume manuscrit de ses oeuvres, page 155; mais il paraît que le plan et la disposition de l'ancien bâtiment ne lui avaient pas sans doute permis d'imaginer rien qui fût digne de la magnificence de Louis XIV; ce qui en suspendit l'exécution et détermina dans la suite à changer cette chapelle de lieu, et à la construire à neuf. En effet, on ne remarque guère, dans les dessins qui nous restent de Perrault, que l'assemblage assez mal assorti de moyennes niches et de grandes arcades; on y voit des médaillons d'une proportion outrée, de petites parties, et des ornements, la plupart chétifs. Tant il est vrai*

*que, quelque habile que soit l'artiste, encore est-il nécessaire, pour que ses productions aient un certain mérite, qu'il ne soit point contraint dans ses idées, et qu'il puisse être l'auteur de l'ouvrage entier."*

Louis Hautecoeur, in the papers we cite below, supposed this design of Perrault's, as well as the domical scheme engraved by Le Blond, to have been of 1678-1680, though it is obvious from Blondel's reference to the old château of Louis XIII that Perrault's proposal would have had to be earlier than the construction of the Château Neuf in 1668. Blondel then goes on to attribute the engraved designs to

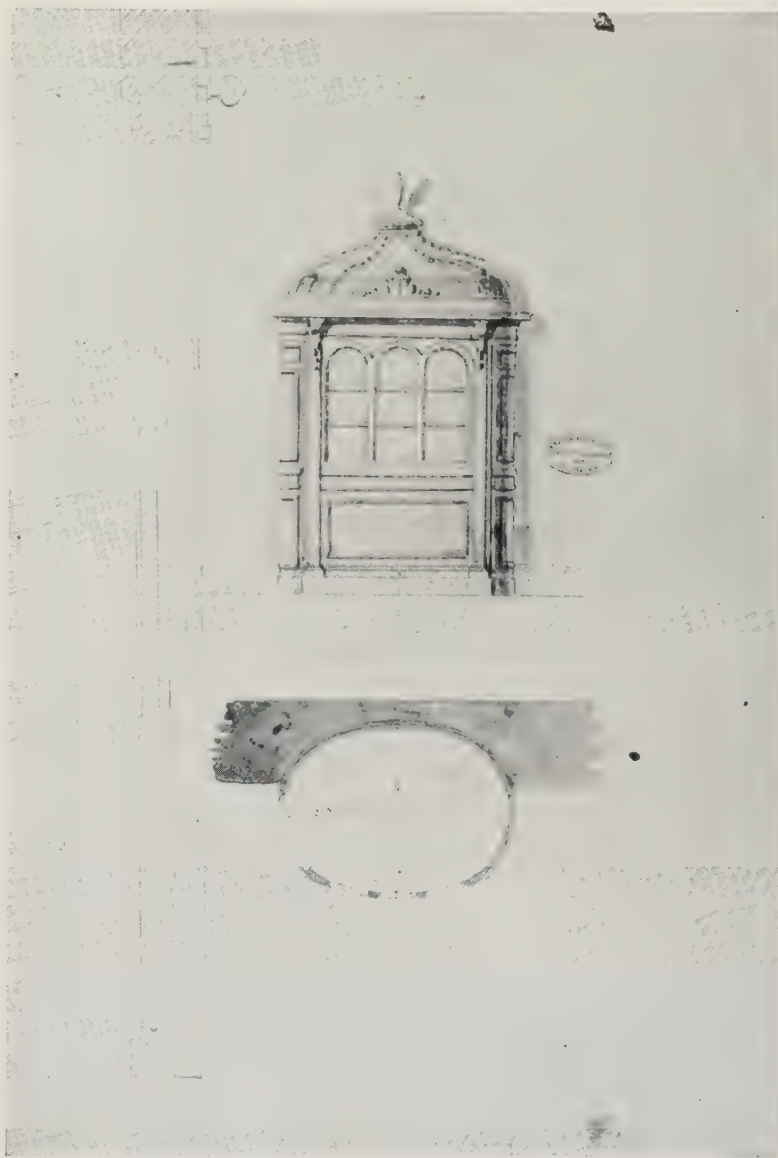


FIG. 6. — Oratories for the Chapel, 1681.

Lemercier, overlooking that Lemercier died in 1654; in this error Nolhac followed him until corrected by Hautecoeur, who first recognized that they belonged to the period of Hardouin Mansart. Blondel said, "*il paroît que la situation de cette chapelle étoit la même que celle d'aujourd'hui*," an erroneous supposition hitherto unquestioned. As the plans show, it was to be not at the south end of the wing, where the chapel stands today, but at its center.

Although neither Lemercier nor Perrault made plans for this chapel, there was another artist, not yet signalized, who did make designs for a chapel at the centre of the wing, namely, Charles Le Brun. Among his papers in the Cabinet de Dessins at the Louvre, along with examples of the engravings of Mansart's project, are three drawings embodying Le Brun's ideas. There can be no doubt of its destination. Both of the plans show the chapel at the middle of a façade of long galleries with a central vestibule of three bays, and one of these plans even shows the four pairs of coupled columns which mark the principal story of the central pavilion of the wing at Versailles. It is the other plan (Fig. 9) which is apparently the earlier of the two studies. The domed central space here is over seventy feet in internal diameter, with very broad diagonal piers. This was reduced to less than sixty feet in the second study (Fig. 10), to which corresponds a section (Fig. 11) with pairs of columns at the entrance to all four arms of the cross, the nave being of greater length than the apsidal choir and transepts. While this design is of much monumental dignity and simplicity—more classical, less baroque, than any domed church in France—a sufficient reason for its rejection, if it was ever presented, was the absence of any tribune for the King, who would thus have had to descend from the *étage noble* to hear mass. The height of the nave also bore no relation to the height of the wing in front of it, and the dome would thus have risen from too low a level to be effective from the gardens.

From the existence of a project by Le Brun, we may doubtless assume that the idea of a domed chapel goes back to the Surintendance of Colbert, who died September 3, 1683. In the time when Le Vau was Premier Architecte, Colbert had not hesitated, both at the Louvre and at Versailles, to call for alternative designs by others, including Le Brun. In the development of the designs for the Grande Galerie in 1678-1679, Mansart was led to adopt many ideas of Le Brun, even for the architectural treatment.<sup>14</sup> With the succession of Louvois to the Surintendance, his hostility brought an end to Le Brun's participation except in the undertakings actually in course of execution.

By contrast with Le Brun's, the design of Mansart as engraved by Le Blond in 1684 (Figs. 12 and 13) does not fail to provide tribunes at the level of the Grands Appartements. The nave is of great height, raising the tall dome sufficiently so that the aspect from the garden would have been very satisfactory.

14. *Mansart and Le Brun in the Genesis of the Grande Galerie de Versailles*, in: "Art Bulletin," XXII, 1940, pp. 1-6.





FIG. 7. — ANTOINE PEZAY. — The Chapel of 1681. — Museum, Versailles.

The genesis of the dome in this design has been penetratingly studied by Hautecoeur,<sup>15</sup> who, however, supposed the engravings of it were from the period 1679-1680, prior to construction of the Chapelle Royale at the Invalides. As he established, it is based on an unexecuted manuscript design of François Mansart for a funerary chapel of the Bourbons at Saint-Denis. The scheme of this had meanwhile been followed more literally by Jules-Hardouin Mansart in the design for the Invalides. As proposed for Saint-Denis and as executed at the Invalides, the building was completely centralized, with the arms of the cross almost equal, the diagonal piers pierced, as earlier at the Val-de-Grace. At Versailles the chapel was to be of longitudinal type, the nave elongated, the transepts shallower, without any enlargement of the crossing except by the introduction there of free-standing columns. The dome was accordingly much less broad. As the relative height of the order had been increased to provide for the tribunes, and as an attic had been introduced to raise the vault above the roofs of the wing in front, the whole effect was thus much more vertical.

We have come to know that Jules-Hardouin Mansart, though he doubtless indicated the *parti* for his designs, did not, in any instance we know, actually put pen

15. *L'Origine du Dôme des Invalides*, in: "L'architecture," XXXVII, 1924, pp. 353-360, and *Jules-Hardouin and François Mansart*, in: "Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français," 1924, pp. 120-121.

or pencil to paper.<sup>16</sup> Who did so in the case of this design for the Chapel of Versailles, made in the course of 1684? In this instance we do not have the manuscript drawings which would enable us to judge by their technique. We know of no drawings from that period, such as we have from as late as 1679 and 1680, made by the second in command, François Dorbay. Antoine Desgodetz, the most important draughtsman, who had been paid in 1678 and 1679 for "*plusieurs plants des maisons royales*," and who again received 1000 livres in 1682 "*sur les desseins qu'il a fait des batiments de Versailles*," was controller at Chambord in the years concerned. Nevertheless, he should by no means be excluded as a possible author, especially as his pay was raised from 1200 livres in 1684 to 1800 in 1685 (II, 721). It was he who, we believe, had made for Mansart the other general drawings for the enlargement of Versailles at this period.<sup>17</sup> He alone among those then on the staff, had both

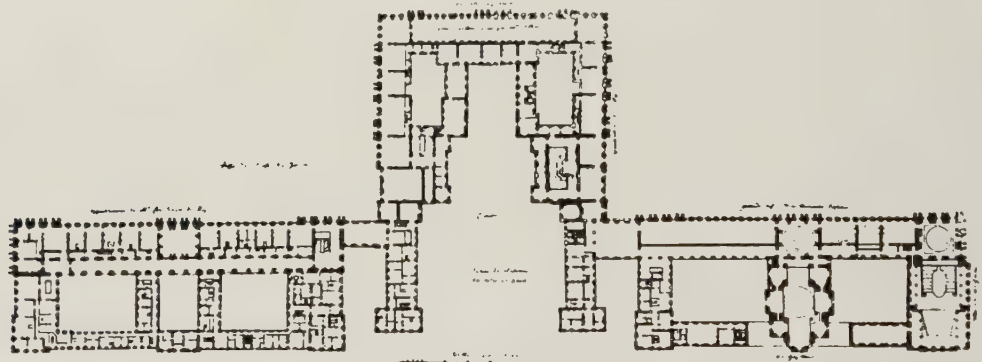


FIG. 8. — JEAN LE BLOND. — Plan of the Château furnished to Tessin, 1687.

a knowledge of the problems of domed buildings and an interest in them, as is evidenced by his later manuscript *Cours d'Architecture*.<sup>18</sup> De Cotte, Daviler, and Lassurance were not employed as architects and draughtsmen until the fall and winter of 1684, nearly a year after Le Blond's engravings were begun.

It was doubtless to the chapel envisaged for the position at the center of the wing that Louvois had reference in the following unpublished letter:<sup>19</sup>

*A Valenciennes ce 22<sup>e</sup> May 1684*

*Vous m'aviez promis de m'envoyer un memoire des marbres qu'il faut pour la chapelle que l'on doit bastir a Versailles, et de ce que le Roy pourroit faire a la place des sources pour y mettre les figures qui estoient dans la grotte, comme je n'ay point eu de vos nouvelles sur cela, Jay crû vous en resouvenir.*

*Louvois*

*Le Sr Mansard*

16. KIMBALL, *The Creation of the Rococo*, 1943, pp. 36-38.

17. Mansart and Le Brun, *Op. cit.*

18. A copy of it by Jean Pinard at the Cabinet des Estampes, Ha 23 and 23a, includes designs for many different types of churches.

19. Archives Nationales o'1784.



Mansart's reply is included in his letter of the 27th,<sup>20</sup> where he speaks of lack of time "*ce qui ne m'a point pu permettre encore de faire le mémoire de tous les marbres de la chapelle de Versailles dont vous me faites l'honneur de me parler aiant été occupé extraordinairement aux choses les plus pressés et j'espère y travailler incessamment.*"

This correspondence is our first documentary confirmation of the journalistic and literary statements that the use of marble had originally been envisaged for the chapel, statements which, indeed, refer to a later time and a later project. The de-

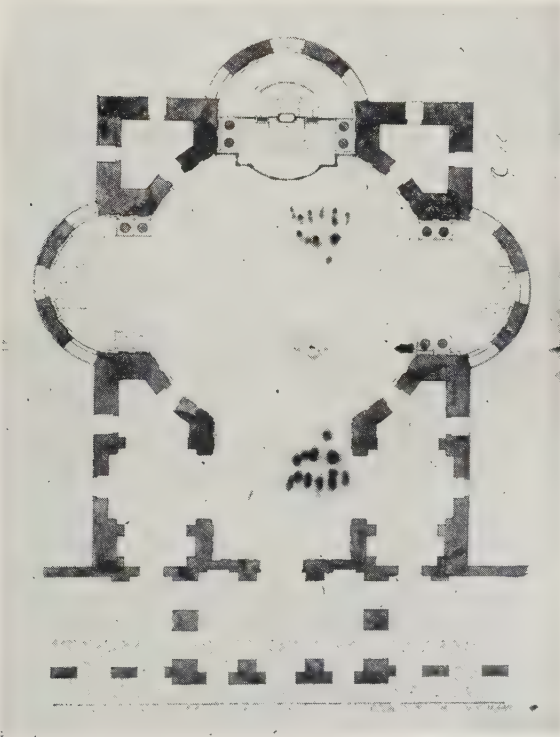


FIG. 9. — CHARLES LE BRUN. — Plan for a domed chapel at the center of the Aile Nord, about 1683.

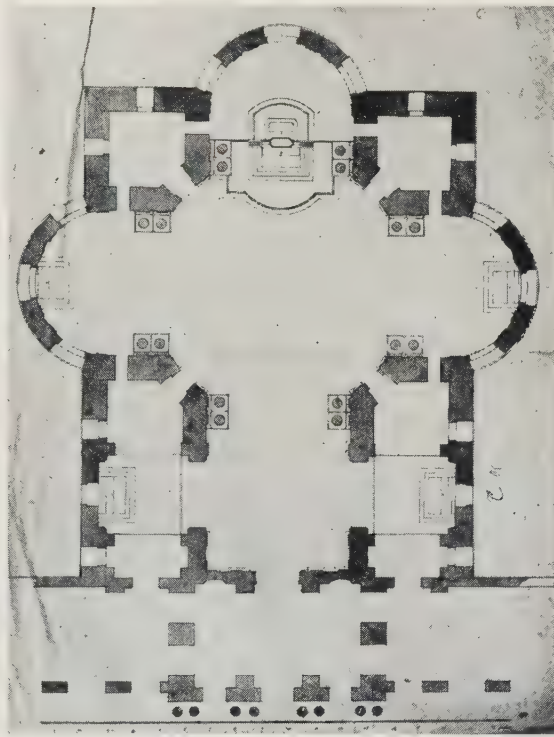


FIG. 10. — Second plan for a domed chapel at the center of the Aile Nord, about 1683.

sign engraved in the course of 1684 shows that the columns and pilasters both of the main order and of that supporting the tribunes were to be of colored marble.

Elements of the rear or eastern portions of the Aile du Nord appear by anticipation in several views of Versailles in 1684 and the years just following. The only part yet surely determined was the southernmost block, closest to the château, exactly symmetrical with the corresponding wing of the Aile du Midi, and, like that wing, having its cornice at the level of that of the Petit Château. This appears in Silvestre's engraving of the château seen from the Grande Place dated 1684, and in the great bird's-eye drawing from above the gardens, signed and dated by Lievin

Cruyl in that year (Fig. 16).<sup>21</sup> Cruyl's drawing shows no other feature whatever behind the façade of the Aile du Nord, thus revealing that the design of the others was still uncertain. The same is true in the first of several large bird's-eye views drawn by Pérelle (Fig. 17),<sup>22</sup> the one from the gardens — antedating, like Cruyl's, adoption of the final design for the Orangerie. The two other views of this series by Pérelle (Figs. 18, 19),<sup>23</sup> both giving the Orangerie as finally designed, show projects for the remainder of the rear buildings of the Aile du Nord as identical with those already erected for the Aile du Midi — i.e., with small wings at either end and with no central chapel, but with two separate narrow wings crossing the



FIG. 11. — Section conforming to the second plan, about 1683.

court at the center. The actual construction of the Aile du Nord was begun at the end of 1684. The designs were submitted to the Academy of Architecture at its session of October 27. On November 19, Feuillet and Le Besgue were paid 60 livres "*pour copies des plans et élévations de la grande aile*" (II, 471), and a small beginning of the mason's work was made in December (413), the bulk of the masonry for the block along the gardens being executed during 1685. The panoramic painting by J.-B Martin, taken from a point of view above the Pièce d'Eau de Neptune (Fig. 20),<sup>24</sup> shows the building at this stage, with only three bays returning at the north end, the wall then breaking off irregularly. Behind are derricks and older buildings on the site, not yet demolished, but as yet no part of any new

21. Reproduced by NOLHAC, *Histoire du Château de Versailles*, 1911, II, at p. 104.

22. *Ib.*, at p. 225.

23. *Ib.*, at p. 25 (from the east), and at p. 81 (from the south).

24. *Ib.*, II, at p. 48. Nohac says "*peint vers 1689*," but actually it was of 1685-1686, as the state of construction establishes.



also "*la maçonnerie et charpenterie du corps de logis de la grande aile d'entre celui déjà fait et les offices de M. Bontemps*" (1122). Bontemps was Intendant et Gouverneur de Versailles; his offices, in the plan of Demortain, 1714-1715, were in the wing on the right of the Cour Royale. That they were already there in the 1680's is shown by an allusion of the accounts of 1688 (III, 19) to the "*demolition de la d'ardoises au-dessus des offices du Sr. Bontemps,*" at the time of the raising of the roofs of the Cour Royale. The corps de logis of 1687 could thus only be the one at the south end of the wing.

We may judge that some foundations for a chapel at the center may actually have been laid. The central block of apartments ultimately erected there—the "*gros pavillon double*" (III, 1136)—is much wider than the ones dividing the courts in the Aile du Midi, having just the width of Mansart's intended chapel as shown on the engraved plans. This block must have been constructed by 1689, when we first find allusions to the "*gros pavillon de la grande aile*" and to "*la deuxième cour de la grande aile*" (III, 261).

The idea of building a domed chapel at the center of the wing must not have been finally relinquished until after 1687. The chapel appears there in the plan of the château made for Nicodème Tessin, the Swedish court architect.<sup>25</sup> Tessin visited Paris in 1687, and the drawing represents the scheme still prevailing at this time. With Le Blond's engraved plans

COUPE ET DÉDANS DE LA CHAPPELLE DE LA GRANDE AILE DU CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES A BASTIR



FIG. 12. — FRANÇOIS MANSART. — Design for a domed chapel at the center of the Aile Nord, engraved by Jean Le Blond, 1684.

25. Illustrated by R. JOSEPHSON, *L'Architecture de Charles XII: Nicodème Tessin, à la Cour de Louis XIV*, 1930, fig. 1, where the plan is wrongly described as "*après 1690.*" It actually shows the château after the creation of the Petite Galerie, 1685, and before the adoption of the present site of the chapel in 1688.



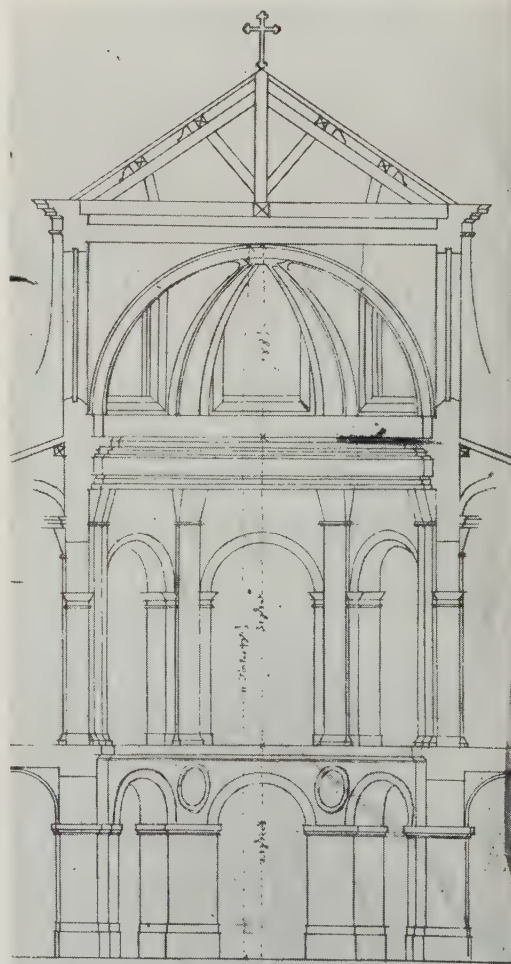
FIG. 13. — FRANÇOIS MANSART. — Design for a domed chapel at the center of the Aile Nord, engraved by Jean Le Blond, 1684.

chapel at the center of the north wing worthily, it was necessary to sacrifice the whole front of the wing to that point, as a gallery of approach. Versailles already had its great gallery and needed no other, whereas all of this front toward the garden was much wanted for additional apartments for princes of the blood. For every reason it was better to draw the chapel closer to the château proper, where it could be reached from the Grand Appartement merely by creating a salon—the future Salon d'Hercule—on the site of the temporary chapel of 1681.

Though the construction of the Aile du Nord had proceeded throughout the years 1685 to 1688, we hear nothing specific of work on the chapel until toward the end of the latter year, when it is obvious that, as the intended site had been changed, the design

inaccessible to photography on account of the war, we reproduce this one which conforms to them (Fig. 8).

The motive for the change of location to the one the chapel now occupies is not hard to divine. For the King to reach a



*Coupe du fond ou du chevet de la Chapelle  
à l'égard du Château de Versailles.*

FIG. 14. — Initial design for the Chapel on its present site, 1688 or 1689.



was now necessarily changed also. On November 21 there was a payment to Davignon for joiner's work on the model of the chapel (III, 49). December 19, 1688, there was a large credit, over 12,000 livres, from the contractors Pierre Le Maistre and Gérard Marcou "*pour le prix des matériaux provenans de la démolition du pavillon et du corps de logis joignant avec toutes les offices, à la place desquelles on doit bastir la chapelle du chateau*" (III, 19). By September of 1689 the same contractors had been paid nearly 50,000 livres on their masonry work for the new chapel (252). The War of the League of Augsburg, which had broken out in 1688, then brought operations to a standstill for a decade.

Hitherto it has been the assumption of writers on Versailles that the design of the chapel begun in 1688-1689 was identical with that of the building we now see, except for the substitution of stone for marble. The plan of the foundations and of the ground story did indeed remain unchanged, but a radical modification was made in the scheme of the superstructure, which vastly altered the esthetic effect and is responsible for its ultimate character. In various repositories we find drawings which show the initial design, which, instead of the columns later substituted, had in the main story a range of arches framed by pilasters. The earliest of these drawings (Fig. 14)<sup>26</sup> bears on its face the inscription "*Coupe du fonds ou du chenet de la chapelle à faire au Château de Versailles.*" The drawing is thus of 1688 or 1689. The handwriting is one I am unable to identify.

It is noteworthy that, in this drawing, the pilasters of the nave (25 feet) and those of the aisles (21 feet) are all far less than the heights ultimately adopted when

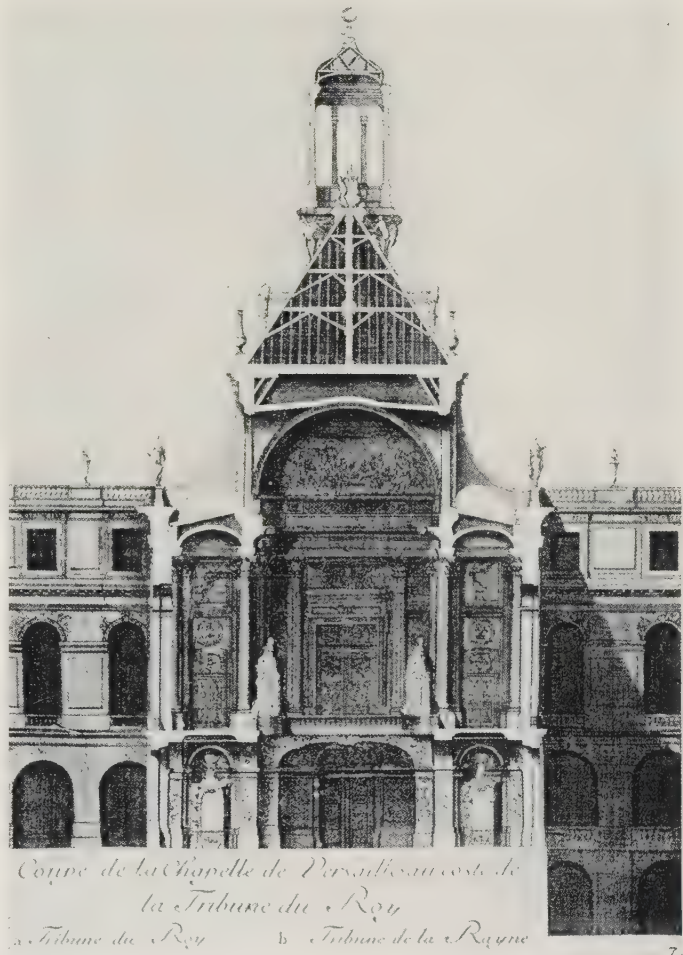


FIG. 15. — Section of the Chapel as built, 1699-1714, engraving by Pierre Lepautre, 1714.

26. Cabinet des Dessins at the Louvre. Cartons Le Brun.

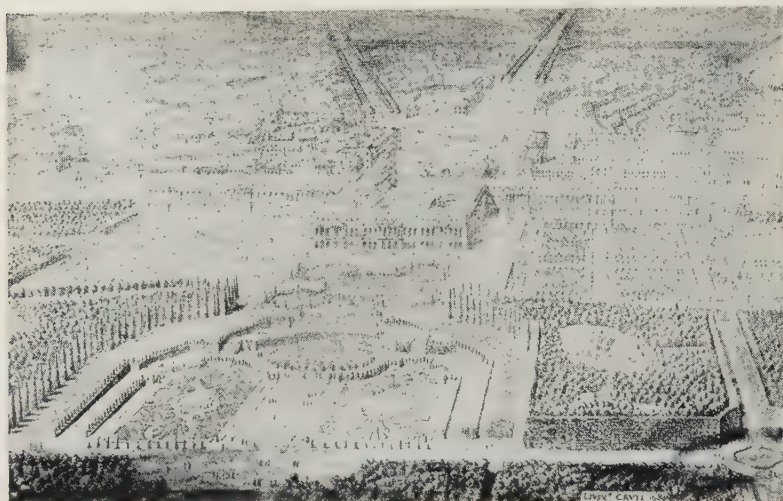


FIG. 16. — LIEVIN CRUYL. — The Gardens and Château of Versailles with a project of the Orangerie, drawing, 1684.

large-scale plan, is dated December 22, 1688, and endorsed "*Elle est commencée sur ce pied là.*" While several of these drawings were made at that period, others were prepared ten years later, after the Peace of Ryswick, to show the state of the work when it had been abandoned. These indicate that the piers of the ground story had been erected to the imposts of the arches.

It is well-known that at the end of 1698 the King resolved to proceed with the construction of the chapel. The "*Gazette de la Haye*" (1699, no.° 46) and Lamarinière's *Dictionnaire* (VI, ii, 122) state that the piers previously built had been intended to be faced with marble, an idea now renounced, for fear of cold, in favor of fine stone. Documents published by Nolhac<sup>27</sup> and by Deshairs<sup>28</sup> show that the foundations were preserved, the piers demolished, and work was resumed in 1699.

It has not been realized, however, that the whole up-

27. *Versailles, Résidence de Louis XIV*, 1922, 336n.

28. *Documents Inédits sur la Chapelle du Château de Versailles*, in: "*Revue de l'Histoire de Versailles*," VII, 1905, pp. 241-262, reprinted with additions, 1906.

work on the chapel was resumed in 1699, and that the exterior cornice lines of the early design have no relation to those of either façade of the château.

This scheme for the chapel is shown in numerous other surviving drawings, both at the Archives Nationales (o'1783) and at the Cabinet des Estampes. One of the former, a

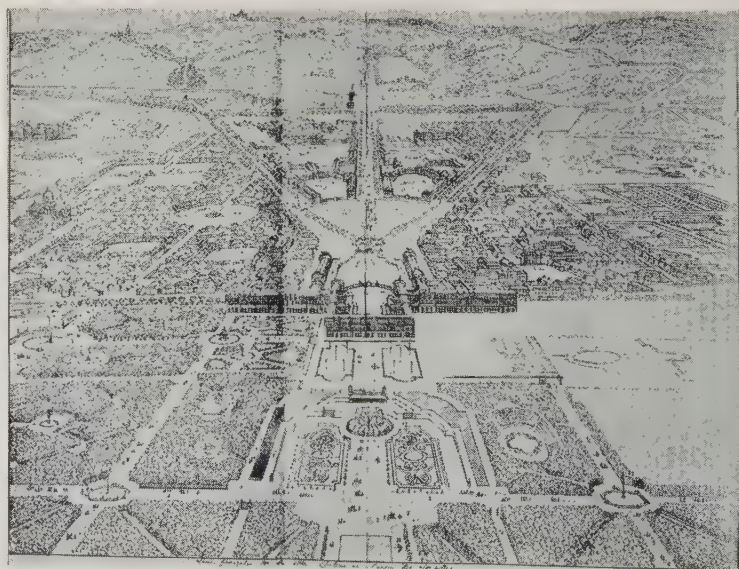


FIG. 17. — PÉRELLE. — Le Château et la Ville de Versailles, vue . . . du côté des Jardins.



per part of the chapel was then redesigned. Two of the original drawings for this final scheme, substantially as executed, survive at the Archives Nationales (o'1783), endorsed:

No. 3. *Plan des tribunes de la Chapelle du Château de Versailles*

No. 7. *Façade de la Chapelle du Costé de la Cour des Cuisines*

The latter is a particularly large and magnificent design, rendered in wash. That this set of drawings preceded the execution is shown by the female figures on the external balustrade, where figures of saints were ultimately adopted.

The general change of design included not merely the substitution of isolated columns, with flat architraves, for the former piers and arches of the main story. It was not merely a change from heaviness to slenderness; it involved also a great increase in actual height. The external cornice was raised to line with the top of the attic of the *Château Neuf*; the internal cornice was placed at the same level, and the columns and pilasters, both inside and out, were made now of twenty-eight feet (Fig. 15). This elongation, this exaltation, changed the whole artistic character in a manner highly characteristic of just this moment in the history of French art. It was in this same year of 1699 that, in Pierre Lepautre's designs for remodellings at Marly, domestic interiors also took on a new height and slenderness.

We are fortunately able to identify the draughtsman of the

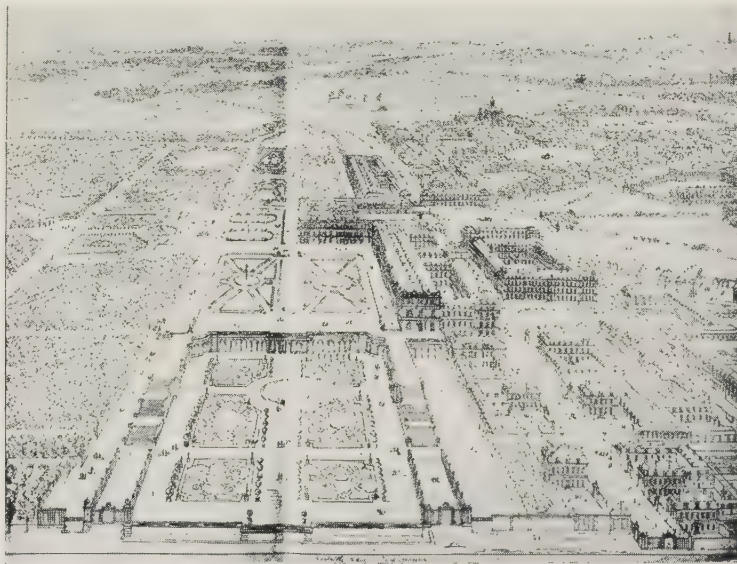


FIG. 19. — PÉRELLE. — The Orangerie as finally designed.

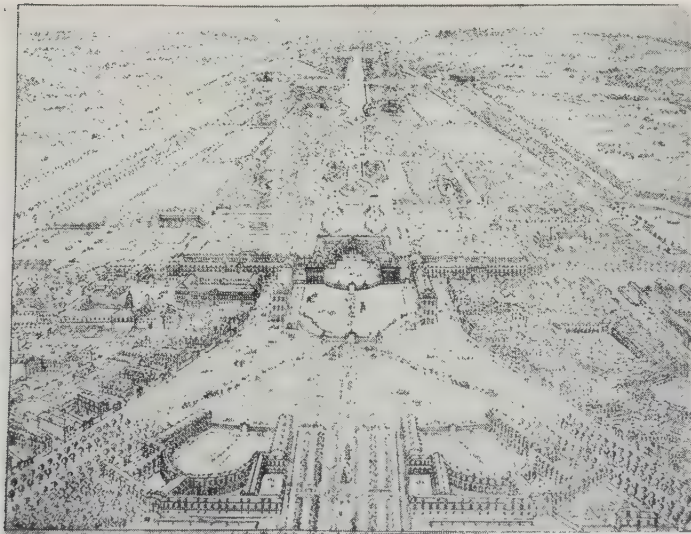


FIG. 18. — PÉRELLE. — The Gardens, Château and City of Versailles, from the east.

chapel designs of 1698-1699 as Lassurance. In the elevation, the pairs of cherubs over the arched windows are substantially identical with the pair over a mirror in one of his drawings of 1698 for the Château de la Ménagerie at Versailles,<sup>29</sup> even, in one instance as to the exact pose of the arms. The indication of the festoons and the shells is likewise identical; the tall vases on the roof may also be compared with those of the outlying cabinets of the Ménagerie in a drawing with the inscription "*donné par l'assurance.*" It is noteworthy that on Mansart's appointment to the Surintendance early in 1699, Lassurance's pay as Dessinateur was increased from 1500 to 3000 livres (IV, 414, 554). We can scarcely doubt that this signal promotion was due to his services, just rendered, in the design of the chapel, in which he shares with Mansart credit for the triumphant result.

September, 1944.

FISKE KIMBALL.

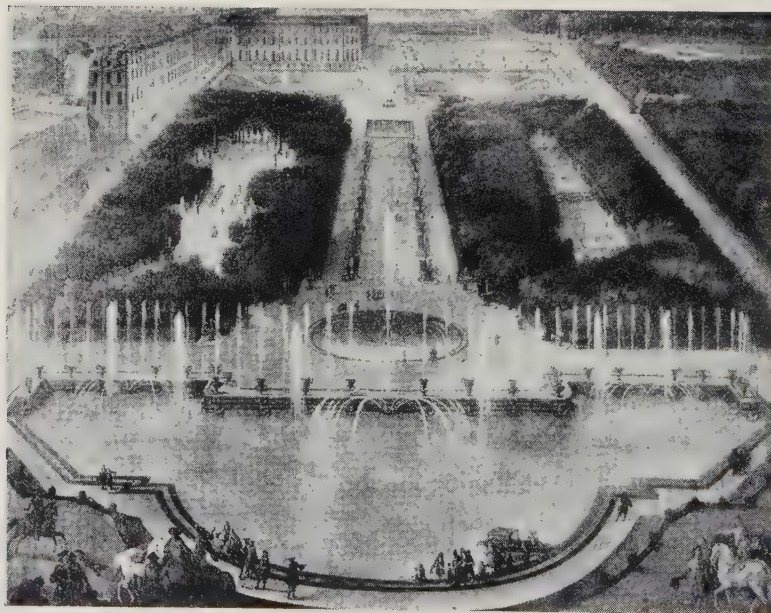


FIG. 20. — J. B. MARTIN. — *Pièce d'Eau de Neptune.*

29. *Le Décor du Château de la Ménagerie*, in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," VI pér., 1936, pp. 245-256.





# MONTFERRAND AND THE *ALEXANDRINE COLUMN* AT LENINGRAD

THE reign of Louis Philippe (1830-1848) was the golden era of French lithographic landscape and travel books which had begun so auspiciously with Charles Nodier's and Baron Taylor's *Voyages Pittoresques et Romantiques dans l'Ancienne France*. In them the romantic spirit expressed itself ideally and freely, unfettered by the relative rigidity of the older copperplate medium. Indeed, after 1826, copper engraved views practically disappeared in France. Nor did steel engraving, with its excessively refined effects, catch the popular fancy as in England. Against over seven hundred French lithographic works of importance which M. Jean Adhémar, of the Bibliothèque Nationale, lists,<sup>1</sup> published between 1817 and 1854, he was only able to discover a bare dozen engraved series of importance. Lithography was a more flexible, versatile, and rapid medium. It was capable of much larger editions than copper engraving.<sup>2</sup> One is not surprised, therefore, that it rapidly outdistanced the older technique in popularity with artists and publishers alike.

By 1830 not only lithography but also "romantic" archeology had become fashionable in Paris. A new class of artists had sprung up: "*les paysagistes pittoresques de la vieille France*," Henri Focillon called them, "*pleins de talent avec*

1. In: *Les Lithographies de Paysage en France*, 1937.

2. Except when plates are steel faced.



FIG. 1. — A. de Montferrand, designer, Courtin, lithographer, figures by Victor Adam. — The Quarry at Pytterlaxe, lithograph. — From the *Alexandrine Column* folio.

*leur jolie écriture archéologique, leur poétique habileté d'exécution*". They roamed all over France and Europe searching for new ideals of beauty. Many of the books they illustrated are well known, but even today Baron Taylor's series of monumental volumes does not enjoy the renown it deserves as an opening gun of the romantic movement, and as one of the first<sup>3</sup> and greatest

works with lithographic illustration.

Another exceedingly fine folio of this same general pattern has escaped even bibliographic attention. It is more often ignored than mentioned in the standard reference works.<sup>4</sup> In none of them is it actually described. Perhaps that is because Auguste Ricard de Montferrand's *Plans et Détails du Monument Consacré à la Mémoire de l'Empereur Alexandre* although printed in Paris (Thierry Frères, 1836), was very largely sold or distributed<sup>5</sup> in Russia; and perhaps also, because it is not "romantic" enough in subject.

The volume<sup>6</sup> deals with the quarrying (Fig. 1) and raising of a great column in red granite to the memory of Napoleon's noted adversary (Fig. 11). To be sure, it is scientific and has sociological and industrial significance; but these were not points looked for by collectors of art books in the XIX Century. Thus the very real beauty of both printing and illustration escaped attention. Today it has become rare even in Russia, and, dealing as it does with an out-of-the-way subject, it slumbers, wherever it may still be found, among the large folios on the bottom shelves of great libraries, unhonored and unsung.

For equally valid reasons, the author was not calculated to inspire enthusiasm in France where all the best bibliographies were written. Montferrand was an exile when the book was published—a soldier of the Imperial Guard who left

3. M. ADHÉMAR lists several works earlier than Taylor's *Normandie*, but no series larger or more remarkable. Further volumes of the *Voyages Pittoresques* came out at short intervals over the next fifty years.

4. Not mentioned by CARTERET, VICAIRE, BRIVOIS or RÜMANN — only briefly by BRUNET and GRAESSE.

5. To the author's friends and clients.

6. Referred to here as the *Alexandrine Column* folio.



the French colors after the Battle of Leipzig in 1813, and who in 1816 seems permanently, though not contentedly, to have settled in Russia for the rest of his life. Altogether author and book, celebrating the hated Alexander, describing the glories of a monument which as neatly topped (Fig. 10) Napoleon's column in the Place Vendôme as the Chrysler Building surpassed the Bank of Manhattan less than a century later, were not likely to win renown in even so broadminded a country as France. The book appears to have been considered to be Russian—when it was considered at all—and Russian books of all periods are still a *terra incognita* to western bibliophiles and scholars.

More recently, however, French artistic opinion has begun to recognize the Franco-Russian architecture of the 1812 period. Once again, to quote Focillon, "*avec le magnifique décor de Pétersbourg, la Russie offrait un théâtre digne des vastes résurrections de l'antique et des froides splendeurs du style Empire, et c'est là qu'il fut, peut-être, le plus impérial.*" Regarded from this point of view, as



FIG. 2. — A. de Montferrand, designer, St. Aulaire, lithographer. — The Boat Trip to St. Petersburg, lithograph. — From the *Alexandrine Column* folio.

well as from the modern interest in science and sociology, Montferrand's folio becomes a definitely important publication. It looks forward as well as back from the year 1836 when it was finished. One sees both the Russia of 1812 and the Russia of today in an amazing way through the eyes and the words of this Frenchman.

There has been a long dispute whether Godefroy Engelmann or Charles de Lasteyrie introduced lithography in France. An article by Mellerio and de

Nussac in the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts"<sup>7</sup> reaffirms de Lasteyrie's strong position in this controversy, but the honors seem still to remain with Engelmann. He practiced the art first (at Mulhouse) and, seeing the potentiality of the medium, recruited a corps of artists among whom he apportioned work in accordance with their own peculiar capabilities and with an eye to the greatest efficiency. The Engelmann concern in Paris soon surpassed that of de Lasteyrie which had begun a few months earlier (1816). Its successor firm, Thierry Frères, was the publisher of the book about which this article is written.

The division of labor adopted by Engelmann is worth a moment's special consideration, for the idea soon permeated all the important printing establishments, with variations. Most of the artists were professional lithographers who became accustomed to complete drawings on stone from cursory sketches made on the spot—an inestimable advantage when travel books were concerned. They not only became specialists on geographic districts—sometimes, it is to be feared, without personal acquaintance with them—but divided up the subject matter, one concentrating on drawing trees, another rocky landscapes, and a third the delineation of water and ships, etc. What

was gained in technical facility, of course, was often lost in local color. But it is surprising how successfully the artists usually worked in combination, and how great a feeling of unity was secured in their best work.

Before sending a lithographic stone to the printer, there remained a last artistic operation to perform. The scene had, usually, to be "animated" with people. Although today Walt

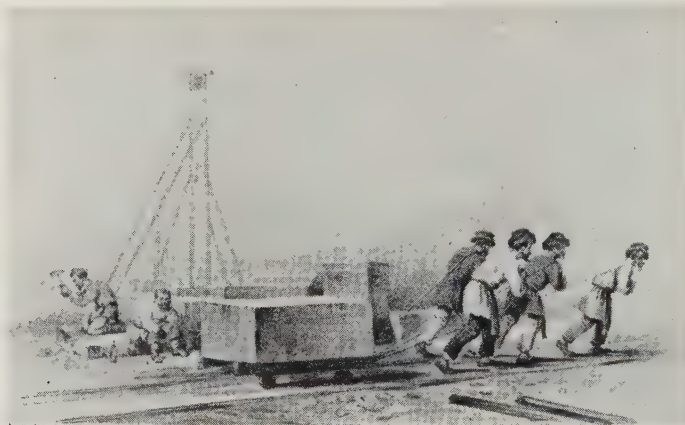


FIG. 3. — A. de Montferrand, designer, Bayot, lithographer. — Dragging Heavy Loads, lithograph. — From the *Alexandrine Column* folio.

Disney's "animators" are the highest priced artists in his studio, the idea of making a scene "live" did not originate in the XX Century. It dates at least as far back as Jacques Callot, in the XVII Century, although the lithographers of the Louis Philippe period greatly systematized and extended it. Disney's animators today carry the division of labor still further. They give "life" to figures which have previously been drawn by others. But specialists and animators contributed to all the great French folios of the 1830's and 1840's, and, incidentally, to many other books. In England similar, though less complicated, cooperation is to be seen between artists like Pugin and Rowlandson in the *Microcosm of London*.

7. September and October, 1935.



Montferrand's volume on the Alexandrine column is a nearly perfect example of the Engelmann system. There is only one exception: the artist, in this case, seems to have made detailed, rather than cursory drawings, on the spot. Thus the lithographs which reproduce his drawings are not lacking in local color. M. Adhémar gives a long bibliography of other books which were made on a cooperative basis.

Over twenty are listed for the year 1836 alone—the year in which Montferrand's book appeared—but Montferrand's is not among them. One wonders again why the book was overlooked, for Adhémar is a thorough scholar.

Professor Focillon only mentions three of the twenty artists who worked on Montferrand's designs. All are relatively minor "artists", in the connoisseur's eye, since they were professional lithographers employed by the Thierry studio in the manner that has been described. And Montferrand was not, essentially, an artist at all, but an architect. The lithographs in his book, however, clearly show that he was unusually talented.

Facts about his life are gathered with difficulty and in fragments, and only just piece together into a whole. One finds that he was born near Paris in 1786; that he studied with Charles Percier, traveled in Italy,<sup>8</sup> worked in a minor capacity on the Madeleine (1804), fought in the Napoleonic campaigns of 1808-1813, arrived in Russia in 1816 virtually unknown, but became conspicuous when he won the competition for renovating St. Isaac's Cathedral, St. Petersburg, in 1816. This was a task which occupied him off and on for the next forty years.

Late in the reign of Alexander I, and of Nicholas I, Montferrand became a fashionable architect—and rich. He assembled a large art collection.<sup>9</sup> But he was never, he writes to his friend Favart, truly happy in Russia. For he longed to be invited home and to be honored in France. Today Montferrand is still remem-

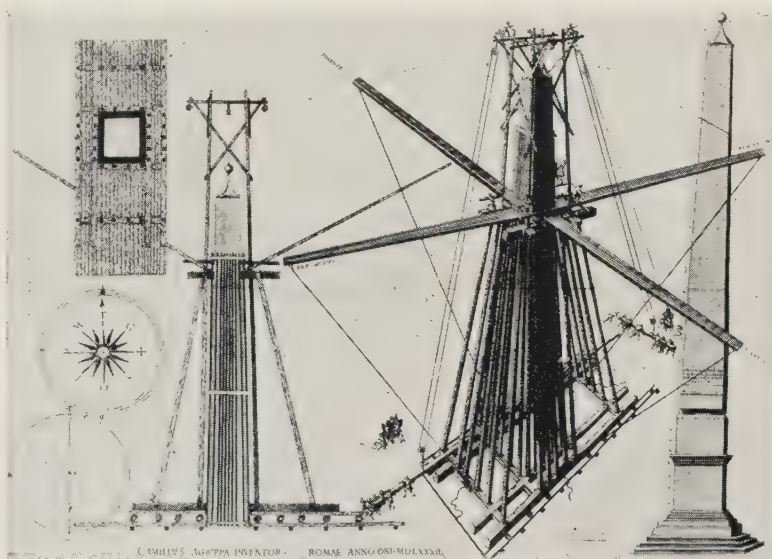


FIG. 4.—Camillo Agrippa, designer (no engraver's name given).—Camillo Agrippa's Apparatus for Moving the Obelisk.—From the *Trattato di Trasportar la Guglia in su la Piazza di San Pietro*, by CAMILLO AGRIPPA, Rome, 1583.

8. A notebook is preserved in the M.S. Dept. of the Leningrad Public Library.

9. As is shown by his description of his collection to his friend Favart in a letter, November 28, 1836, published in the "Archives de l'Art Français," Vol. 17, (1932).

bered in Russia, where a book has recently come out about him.<sup>10</sup> But it is in Russian and repeats, without critical evaluation, what Montferrand says in his book on the Alexandrine Column and on the St. Isaac restoration, his other most important work.

Of his last years we know little, except that he lost favor soon after the death of Tsar Nicholas I. At the opening ceremony on the completion of St. Isaac's Cathedral, in 1858, he was greatly disturbed to find the new Tsar Alexander II

unfriendly to him. After over forty years' work on this single enterprise, and at the age of seventy-two, this was too much to bear. In a month he was dead and the Tsar did not respect his last wish to be buried in the vaults of St. Isaac's. Instead his body was returned to France where his reputation lies buried, too, as we have had reason to discover.

A much more vivid picture of Montferrand as a man, and clear evidence of his learning, tact, good sense, and shrewd ability to flatter a privileged hierarchy, can be gained from the book which is the subject of this article. His letters are equally valuable. Those printed in the "Archives de l'Art Français" tell us that his real name was Auguste Ricard and that he added "de Montferrand" as an indispensable adjunct to making his fortune in a foreign land! They also exhibit his worldliness and restlessness. But his book reveals his better side, including his broad human understanding.

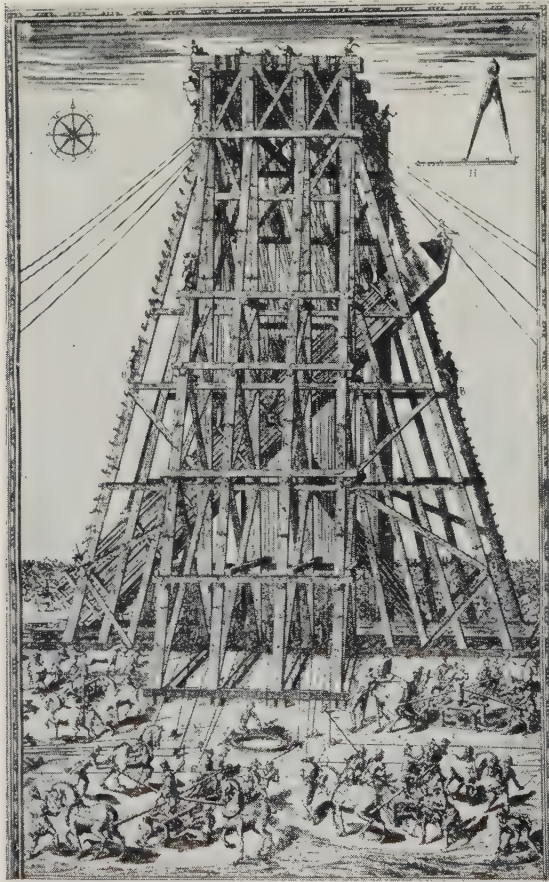


FIG. 5. — Fontana, designer, Bonifacio of Sibenico, engraver. — Domenico Fontana's Apparatus for Raising the Obelisk. — From *Della Trasportatione dell' Obelisko Vaticano*, by DOMENICO FONTANA, Rome, 1590.

In chapter VII of the Alexandrine Column folio, Montferrand devotes two full pages to a discussion of Russian workers. They are also the subject of one full-page lithograph (Fig. 9) and numerous vignettes which are among the most interesting features of the book. How strange that anyone should take such a genuine interest in the worker at this time, and in an almost feudal realm (Fig. 3)! In this respect, as in his detailed

10. N. P. NIKITIN, *Montferrand*, Leningrad, 1939.





FIG. 6.— A. de Montferrand, designer, Bichebois, lithographer, figures by Bayot.— Montferrand's Raising of the Alexandrine Column, lithograph.— From the *Alexandrine Column* folio.

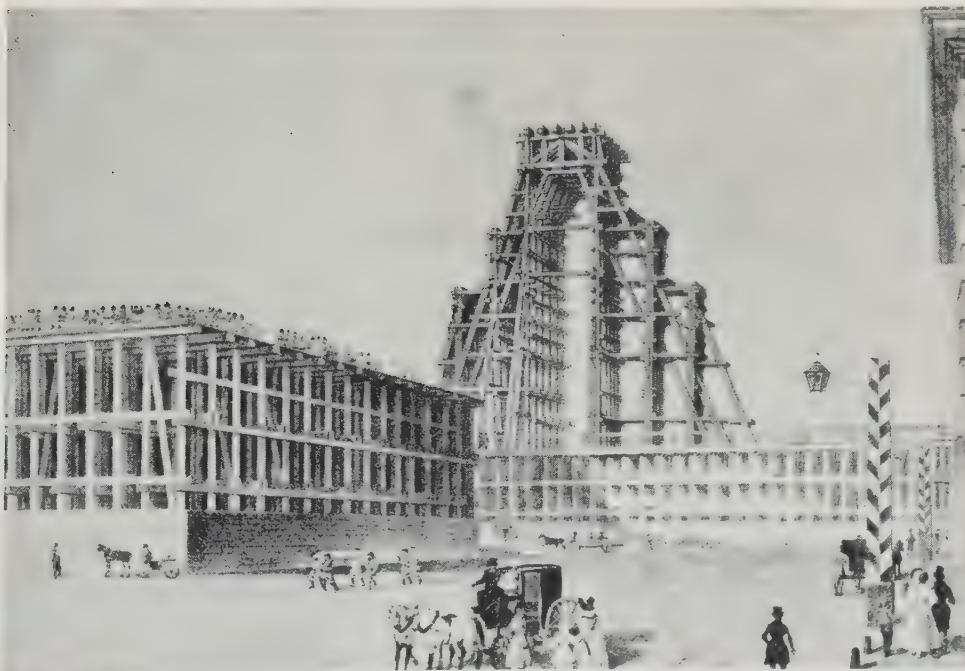


FIG. 7.— A. de Montferrand, designer, Bichebois, lithographer, figures by Bayot.— Detail of Street Scene Before the Raising of the Alexandrine Column, lithograph.— From the *Alexandrine Column* folio.



FIG. 8. — A. de Montferrand, designer, Evariste Fragonard, lithographer. — The foundry of M. Baird at St. Petersburg, lithograph. — From the *Alexandrine Column* folio.

description of the mechanical operations, and in the improvement of his equipment, in his willingness to take advice and to learn from opposition, one gains a high respect for Montferrand. One also sees, foreshadowed, the Russian greatness of today in his estimate of the Russian workman's abilities, in the capable help he received from Russian engineers and contractors, in the magnitude of the obstacles which they overcame with limited technical equipment.

The book is written throughout in French which was an indispensable second language to any educated Russian. Even laymen will find it surprisingly good reading. Montferrand gives a broad picture of the whole engineering operation from the conception of

the monument to its inauguration on August 30th, 1834—five years after the great monolith which formed the shaft of the column had been quarried at Pytterlaxe in Finland. It is a magnificent folio, almost exactly 24 x 18 inches, as judged by the Tsar Alexander II's copy.<sup>11</sup> There are 41 full-page lithographic illustrations, all but three from Montferrand's drawing, by a galaxy of trained lithographers in Thierry's employ: Alexandre Evariste Fragonard (son of the great Jean Honoré) (Fig. 8), Arnout, Courtin (Fig. 1), St. Aulaire (Fig. 2), Bichebois (Figs. 6, 7 and 11), Sabatier, Bayot (Figs. 3 and 9), Villeneuve, Roux, etc.,— with the figure subjects drawn by Wattier, Victor Adam (Fig. 1) and Bayot (Figs. 6, 7, 9 and 11). The last named, with Bichebois, is responsible for some of the best renderings of Montferrand's drawings in the book (Fig. 7).

Karl Ivanovitch Kollmann (1788-1846), Russian engraver and lithographer, is the designer of the only other important full-page plates (Fig. 9), and of one of the best vignettes, of which there are twelve in all, as chapter head and tail pieces. All the illustrations but two are colored by hand; for chromolithography, although practiced in England by Owen Jones in 1836, was not introduced into France until

<sup>11</sup>. On loan at the Harvard Library, as is also the Tsarskoe Selo Palace copy of Montferrand's work on St. Isaac's (St. Petersburg, 1820).



January, 1837. These two full-page plates are monochrome. The coloring is bright and untouched, with a fine glaze that is still fresh. Apparently the Tsar Alexander hardly looked at his copy of the book! It is not certain whether other copies were colored—since this was undoubtedly a copy for presentation—but it is likely that they were, given Montferrand's wealth and the taste of the Russian Court.

Alexander II figures several times in the text, but never by name. Montferrand refers to him impressively, but always impassively, as *S.A.I. Mgr. le Grand-Duc Héritier*, whereas he often alludes to the Tsar Nicholas and other officials with some warmth and interest. To be sure Alexander was only eighteen in 1836, but one wonders why then, or later, Montferrand did not cultivate the man who became a wiser and more liberal ruler than his father.



FIG. 9. — Kollmann, designer, figures and lithography by Bayot. — The Principal Workers Employed at the Raising of the Alexandrine Column, lithograph. — From the *Alexandrine Column* folio.

In the Introduction, Montferrand tells of his winning the competition to design the monument in memory of the Tsar's brother Alexander who had died in 1825. He based his drawing on the column of Trajan in Rome—as had the designer of the Place Vendôme column, in honor of Napoleon, before him. But this was not his first plan, which Nikitin reproduces from a drawing now in the Leningrad Institute of Railroad Transport Engineers Library. The first drawing was an obelisk like the one in the Place Louis XVI in Paris—sculptured in the neo-classic style with bas-reliefs. Very likely a desire to outdo Napoleon's monument weighed heavily upon the minds of the Art Commissioners headed by Prince

Wolkonsky, whom the Tsar appointed to make the award. Montferrand's revised plan was shrewdly calculated to do that very thing. The shaft was to be solid, not hollow, and fashioned from a single piece of red granite over 100 feet long and 22 feet in cross section, which he had ascertained could be quarried at Pytterlaxe on the coast of the Gulf of Finland.

Both the quarrying (Fig. 1) and the moving (Fig. 2) of the carefully fashioned parts of the monument were major operations. Nothing so heavy, of which record has been kept,<sup>12</sup> had ever been fashioned into a perfect form and moved so far before. Six hundred workers slaved for two years under a young Russian contractor, M. Basil Jakovlev, who risked capital and reputation for the honor of supplying the monolith. It was interesting to Montferrand, as it is to us, that the same methods and tools, with only slight alterations, were used by the Russians on this part of the work as had been used in Egypt thousands of years before.

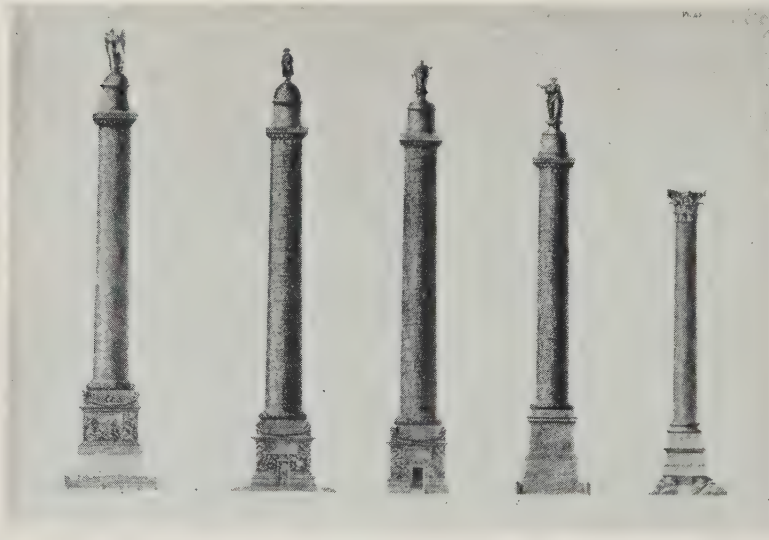


FIG. 10. — A. de Montferrand, designer, Muller, lithographer. — A Comparison of the Five Most Famous Columns, lithograph. — From the *Alexandrine Column* folio.

The base of the monument was made up of some twenty-five other granite blocks, one of which weighed about 500 tons. They moved these with a system of log rollers, from the quarry to a newly built dock and onto a barge especially constructed for the larger piece of the shaft. Without accident the barge was towed by two steam tugs (Fig. 2) to the quay on the Neva near the Winter Palace Square

where the monument was destined to stand. To make an absolutely level and firm spot near the river bank was in itself a difficult engineering task, involving the driving of many piles into a sand bank well below street level. But the task of placing the 500-ton block with mathematical exactitude on a surface of equal dimensions by turning it over onto the spot selected, was a still harder engineering feat.

On February 3, 1832, however, Montferrand's men accomplished this in the presence of the Tsar, the Tsaritsa, and other notables. When the block fell over,

<sup>12</sup>. Nearly 920 tons in its completed and lightest form.





FIG. 11. — A. de Montferrand, designer, Bichebois, lithographer, figures by Bayot. — The Completed Monument to Alexander I, lithograph. — From the *Alexandrine Column* folio.

Montferrand says, with a good sense of the dramatic, “*il occasionna un bruit sourd et une commotion si forte que le sol de la place du Palais en fut ébranlé, et que plusieurs personnes qui traversaient près de là en traîneau, reçurent une secousse à peu près semblable à celle d’un tremblement de terre.*”<sup>13</sup> Moreover, since this was accomplished “*dans le cœur de l’hiver, par un froid de dix à quinze degrés, je fis broyer le ciment avec de l’eau-de-vie et j’y fis mettre une dizaine de savon.*” Montferrand’s precautions were well taken. The block dropped as it should and was adjusted by capstans before the cement began to harden. We begin to see that Montferrand deserved his successes; that they were not attained by luck or without forethought.

He was equally assiduous when it came to determining the proportions for his column. First he studied the great columns of antiquity, and then the ideas of more recent—renaissance and baroque—architects on the subject. After considerable thought he decided against entasis although he did taper the column slightly—from 12 feet in diameter at the bottom to 10 feet 6 inches at the top. This variation caused considerable difficulty when the column was rolled from the quarry to the dock 300 feet away. Frequent adjustments of its position were necessary. But finally on June 19, 1832, at four in the morning, everything was ready for its embarkation. The monolith shaped and roughly polished, together with its equipment for moving weighed nearly a thousand tons. No wonder the

13. Montferrand further dramatizes the effect by claiming that Prince Wolkonsky’s horse, passing at some distance, was frightened to the point of nearly throwing his rider!

barge tilted heavily as the weight was felt. Suddenly the beams of the runway broke and the column slumped down on the edge of the barge and against the dock. Fortunately it went no further; the water was so shallow that the barge stuck on the mud bottom and held. But it took two days of the most exhausting work by soldiers from a neighboring army camp, to pull the column into the center and to refloat the barge for its long journey.

The trip across the Gulf of Finland was equally adventurous. It took four days. Two steam tugs were employed which—not surprisingly in Russia in 1832—developed engine trouble! But the monolith arrived safely on July 1, the birthday of the Empress, and was disembarked before a great crowd in a perfectly planned and timed operation which lasted only ten minutes! Montferrand and Jakovlev, who continued as chief contractor throughout the whole five years, had learned their lesson at Pytterlaxe.

The next few chapters are the most interesting ones in the book. Montferrand discusses at length the moving by Domenico Fontana of the obelisk which the Roman Emperor Caligula had brought from Egypt and had set up in the Circus of Nero (Fig. 5).<sup>14</sup> He gives nearly as full and accurate an account of the procedure as we know today and is fully aware of earlier plans on the parts of Popes Nicholas V, Julius II and Paul III. He was also aware that Pope Gregory XIII “had held consultations on the subject,” as, for instance with Camillo Agrippa (Fig. 4),<sup>15</sup> but he appears to be rather more credulous of Michelangelo’s interest than present investigation would seem to warrant. The whole subject of the Vatican obelisk will be discussed at length by Dr. George Sarton in a forthcoming article in “Isis.” Suffice it to say here that Montferrand clearly studied it and may well have based the format and design of his own book upon it, despite its slightly smaller size and greater number of engraved illustrations.

He also studied the transportation of the great rock on which Peter the Great’s statue by Falconet was mounted in Catherine II’s reign, the raising of the obelisk of Luxor in the Place Louis XVI at Paris, and the bas-relief depicting a similar operation in the Roman Emperor Theodosius’ reign in the Hippodrome at Constantinople! With essentially the same system of tackle blocks, capstans and ropes, the making of which at the Sasonoff factory by machine he carefully describes, Montferrand determined to raise this heavier<sup>16</sup> weight. But he was forced to provide a far heavier scaffolding, more efficient combinations of capstans and working teams. Not all the engineers consulted agreed with his arrangements so that the 30th of August, 1832, the day appointed by the Tsar for raising the column

14. The illustration appears in a copy of: FONTANA, *Della Trasportatione dell'Obelisco Vaticano*, Rome, 1590, in the Harvard Library.

15. The illustration shows the plan which this adventurous Renaissance character proposed but which was never attempted.

16. The Vatican Obelisk weighed only some 330 tons.



onto its pedestal, was awaited with great anxiety.

Early that morning a crowd began to assemble in the nearby streets and buildings. The General Staff building alone harbored over ten thousand! The Palace was crowded with courtiers. It was estimated that nearly three thousand gathered throughout the city. The Tsar's tent "*en cachemire de couleurs vives et variées*" gave an oriental touch to the scene, and was placed close to the scaffolding and monolith as testimony of the Tsar's confidence in his architect's ability to carry off the tremendous operation safely. Nevertheless, the reader feels for that intrepid and cold soldier-disciplinarian Nicholas I, as well as for the sixty particularly strong and active workers who were seated on the column itself waiting to be hoisted into the air and to watch and guide the pulleys and ropes with which the monolith was swathed. Each of these workers had an iron crowbar for emergencies. The 3000 soldiers, who made the capstans move (Fig. 6) were "the old companions at arms (the veterans) of Alexander I."

To have an idea of this sight one must imagine, says Montferrand, a glorious summer's day. An immense crowd stretched out in every direction. By the time the Imperial party had arrived and salutations were over, the Winter Palace clock had struck two. Then the Tsar gave Montferrand the order to begin the operation. A bell struck three times and, amidst a sudden silence, the monolith slowly rose with the sixty workers clinging to it like monkeys. All three thousand soldiers began work on the capstans which gave forth dull groans—the only sound in the profound hush that fell on all assembled. No one failed to realize during the next hundred minutes that one important failure in the equipment, or mistake in manoeuvre, might cause a catastrophe which would destroy several years' work and scores of lives!

Nevertheless, despite one small accident to a tackle block which broke and was quickly repaired, the column was raised till it hung suspended, free from its carriage, which was thereupon removed. At a signal, the troops reversed themselves on the capstan bars and let the ropes out again till the monolith descended slowly on to its pedestal "without the slightest shock." Hurrahs burst forth from the crowd and the more greedy among them "threw themselves on some broken wheels, bolts, and other debris, carrying them off as souvenirs of so happy a day." The Tsar, after expressing his satisfaction to the nobles around him, turned to Montferrand and said, "*Montferrand, vous vous êtes immortalisé!*"—a remark which proved as untrue in fact as it was probably typical of this "Autocrat of all the Russias!"

One fault of Montferrand's is at once apparent here and in the letters<sup>17</sup> to Favart—his vanity. In the latter one quickly surmises the reason for, as well as the measure of, his conceit. He had what today the layman would call an inferi-

17. Published in: "Archives de l'Art Français," New Series, Vol. XVII (1932), pp. 207-223.

ority complex. He always speaks of returning to France "if only he is invited by the King (Louis Philippe)," if only he can be first made an officer of the *Légion d'honneur*. He assures Favart that it will be worth while visiting him in Russia, "*car, mon brave ami, vous saurez qu'un architecte de S.M.I. l'Empereur de Russie à Pétersbourg, a une galerie de 70 pieds de longueur avec force statues, tableaux, bronzes, antiquités, vases, etc., qu'à l'une des extrémités est une cheminée en marbre de 30 pieds de hauteur . . . à l'autre bout, une estrade ornée de 100 vases du Japon, dont plusieurs sont réputés les plus beaux de l'Europe, des tables en vert antique . . . comme l'on n'en trouve plus que dans les palais de souverains. . .*" One is not surprised that a man who writes these lines should proudly report the Tsar's remark: "*Montferrand, vous vous êtes immortalisé!*"

There are many other examples. When describing the four bronze reliefs of the pedestal, sculptured by Swintzoff and Lépée after his own designs, he observes:<sup>18</sup> "*ils sont de haut relief, et traités avec une énergie qui fait honneur au talent de ces deux sculpteurs. Les figures sont nobles, bien posées, et d'un dessin pur et large qui rappelle le beau temps de l'art chez les Grecs. Mais ce que ces bas-reliefs offrent de plus remarquable encore, c'est la beauté des trophées, qui ne le cèdent pas aux plus belles sculptures antiques, et surpassent beaucoup les ouvrages modernes du même genre.*" These compliments mainly reflect on himself and not upon the sculptors! In actual fact the reliefs, which are executed in bronze and sheathe the pedestal of the monument, are handsome and well designed. But they are frigidly neo-classic and are based, all too closely, on those at the base of Trajan's and Napoleon's columns.

Montferrand is much more interesting when he describes, in the next paragraphs, the process by which the models were made, and the bronzes cast in the foundry of M. Baird (Fig. 8). He gives a detailed account of the whole procedure which he frankly says was devised by the ingenuity of a contemporary English engineer, William Handyside, "who directed all the castings with complete success." The foundry, as shown in this illustration, is one of the earliest artistic representations of an industrial process in a XIX Century book. It is typical of Montferrand that he recognized the importance of the rising industrial revolution, made use of its new techniques, and gave them a place of honor in his book.

In this same spirit, he pays tribute to the various capacities and skills of his workmen. He describes their character, the organization of their various trades by districts in Russia, and makes keen observations on their life, health, and happiness. He sees no harm in their working twelve hours a day; for they had an average of five fete days a month and stopped work an hour earlier on Saturday in order to bathe!

<sup>18</sup> P. 30 of the *Alexandrine Column* folio.





FIG. 12. — A. de Montferrand, designer, Champin, lithographer. — The Floods of Time, lithographic vignette.  
— From the *Alexandrine Column* folio.

Montferrand's esthetic theories were sound: "I am firmly convinced that those who take a new path, without comparison with the classic models, have de-based architecture, even though I do not mean that love for the past should bring one to imitate it without discernment."

His scholarship was thorough and remarkably broad. There were difficulties in studying in Russia then—much greater ones than now. But fortunately Montferrand had the means, and evidently spared no effort and expense in having books sent from Italy, Germany and France. He made numerous models of everything he planned. Some of these he presented to dignitaries whose approval or patronage he sought; others he kept to show to architects and engineers whose opinions and advice he constantly invited.

He was never stubborn about his own views, or jealous, as one would suppose—given his vanity—when another artist's designs were preferred to his own. For example, he pays tribute to the Russian sculptor Orlovsky<sup>19</sup> "*qui a perfectionné son beau talent pendant les années qu'il a passées à Rome sous les auspices de T[h]orwaldson.*" Orlovsky won a competition for the statue of the angel which surmounts the Alexandrine column, against Montferrand's own designs.

19. Boris Ivanovitch Orlovsky (1796-1837) who also designed the statues of Kutuzoff and Barclay de Tolly in the Kazan Cathedral at Leningrad.

*"En considérant le monument, aujourd'hui qu'il est achevé, je trouve sa partie supérieure en parfaite harmonie avec son ensemble,"* Montferrand generously observes. Since the rest of the monument was entirely based on his own designs, this is an unusual tribute from one who sought honors and renown so eagerly, and reported those he received with such vanity.

By the end of August, 1834, after five years of work, the polishing of the shaft, the bas-reliefs, the bronze capital, and the surmounting statue were all completed and in place; the scaffolding, platform, and debris had been removed, and the column was ready for its dedication (Fig. 11). This event took place on August 30, 1834, with a great military parade and a religious service, the details of which Montferrand carefully records. Free seats were given at the theatres of St. Petersburg to all those who took part, including all the foot soldiers. This is a good Russian custom which has survived to this day in the Soviet State, and is an encouragement to the dramatic and musical arts deserving of emulation elsewhere. All those who had cooperated in building the monument *"furent comblés des grâces de S.M.I., (The Tsar) et reçurent des marques de sa munificence"*. Montferrand was not the least among these. *"Le jour même de l'inauguration, je suis créé chevalier de l'ordre de saint Vladimir de la troisième classe, et je reçus une pension de cinq mille roubles, à laquelle S.M. daigna encore joindre la somme de cent mille roubles [a fortune in itself!] qui fut mise immédiatement à ma disposition."*

On this happy note, the text of Montferrand's book on the Alexandrine Column ends. But there is a coda, in the form of a last, and most romantic, vignette (Fig. 12). It shows the Alexandrine monument and the statue of Peter the Great, their bases swept by the seas of time. Beneath are these descriptive, fanciful lines, doubtless by Montferrand, which do more credit to his imagination, gratitude, and diplomacy, than to his historical foresight: *"Après de nombreuses années, quand des nations nouvelles se seront succédées, quel sera l'étonnement du voyageur, lorsque s'aventurant sur l'antique mer du Nord, il sera forcé d'arrêter son esquif devant l'image gigantesque du Tsar, dominant les ruines de la grande cité, et franchissant avec peine les restes du temple, il apercevra, seule, debout, au milieu des flots agités, la colonne Alexandrine, attestant encore la gloire impérissable des immortels souverains de la Russie."*

The siege of Leningrad during the high tide of German invasion, some years ago, evokes in our minds a very different scene and a greater Russia.

January, 1945.

PHILIP HOFER.





FIG. 1. — PRUD'HON. — Le Séjour de l'Immortalité, dessin à la plume et au lavis. — Legs Winthrop, Musée Fogg, Université Harvard, Cambridge, Mass.

# RACINE ET PRUD'HON

*"Andromaque, je pense à vous!"*  
(BAUDELAIRE)

**I**L illustra Racine, qui n'a jamais été mieux senti." On lit cette phrase d'Henri Focillon dans le chapitre exquis de sa *Peinture au XIXe Siècle* où il définit le génie de Prud'hon.<sup>1</sup> Je n'ai point ici d'autre objet que de développer ce thème, en étudiant quelques dessins de Prud'hon; l'histoire de ces dessins est quelque peu confuse; je tenterai, chemin faisant, de la débrouiller.

\* \* \*

1. Tome I, pp. 74-75.

De 1801 à 1805, les Didot publièrent un ouvrage que Brunet salue comme "l'un des plus magnifiques que la typographie d'aucun pays ait encore produits." C'étaient les *Oeuvres Complètes de Jean Racine*, en trois volumes in-folio, illustrées par Prud'hon, Moitte, Gérard, Girodet, Serangeli, Chaudet et Peyron.

On rencontre Prud'hon dès le frontispice, gravé par Marais, qui représente l'apothéose du poète (Fig. 2). "Son Génie et Melpomène le conduisent à l'Immortalité," qui s'apprête à le couronner. Derrière lui, on aperçoit vaguement deux autres allégories, la Comédie avec son masque, et (semble-t-il) la Renommée avec sa trompette. Une rangée de bustes antiques domine la scène: on distingue les noms d'Euripide, de Sophocle, d'Aristophane et de Ménandre.

Nous avons conservé deux dessins pour cette composition: l'un très libre et plein de vivacité, l'autre d'une exécution beaucoup plus poussée.<sup>2</sup> Le charme prud'honien y est plus sensible encore que dans la gravure; il s'épanouit et se déploie dans ce ciel de l'allégorie, qui est "son domaine et son empire."<sup>3</sup> Le naturel et l'idéal, dans ces régions heureuses, se rencontrent sans se heurter. Cette "distribution de prix" est toute nuancée d'émotion et de grâce: Racine s'incline à demi, avec une timidité charmante et fière; son Génie le soutient et l'encourage, comme un frère divin, tandis que la Comédie sourit dans l'ombre, jeune faune tendre et moqueur.

Après un tel début, on s'apprête à savourer les illustrations conçues par Prud'hon pour les tragédies raciniennes. On est déçu: Prud'hon n'apparaît plus une seule fois.

Il y a là un mystère. Chaque tragédie, dans l'édition Didot, est illustrée de quatre ou cinq planches (une par acte, en général); les artistes s'étaient partagé la besogne, Peyron prenant *Mithridate*, Girodet *Andromaque* et *Phèdre*; Gérard, à lui tout seul, avait pris *Alexandre*, *Bajazet* et *Iphigénie*.<sup>4</sup> Pourquoi Prud'hon n'a-t-il pas eu sa part?

Clément propose l'explication suivante: "Les Didot aimaient et appréciaient Prud'hon. Ils lui avaient demandé le frontispice ET QUELQUES AUTRES PLANCHES pour le Racine. Mais ils avaient donné à David une sorte de direction, de haute main, sur la partie artistique de l'ouvrage; et c'est naturellement à ses élèves, notamment à Gérard et à Girodet, que David avait conseillé aux Didot de s'adresser. Il est probable que la collaboration de Prud'hon ne plut ni au maître ni aux élèves, surtout lorsqu'ils eurent vu le frontispice qui dans ce genre est un chef-d'oeuvre, et qu'ils trouvèrent prudent de ne pas donner lieu à des comparaisons dangereuses."<sup>5</sup> Ce serait donc la jalousie de ses rivaux qui aurait limité au frontispice la participation de Prud'hon.

2. Voir: J. GUIFFREY, *L'Oeuvre de P. P. Prud'hon*, 1924 ("Archives de l'Art Français," Nouvelle Période, Tome XIII), nos 1064 et 1063.

3. E. DELACROIX, *Prud'hon*, dans: "Revue des Deux Mondes," 1er Nov. 1846, p. 445.

4. Que sont devenus les dessins originaux? Voir: A. J. PONS, *Les Editions Illustrées de Racine*, 1878, p. 39: "Brunet prétend qu'ils ont été dispersés, Quérard soutient que l'exemplaire vélin dans lequel on les avait insérés a passé en Angleterre."

5. CH. CLÉMENT, *Prud'hon*, p. 250, note.



Cependant, avant de se voir évincé, il avait commencé à illustrer une tragédie, et peut-être deux. C'est à lui, paraît-il, qu'avaient été tout d'abord assignés la *Thébaïde* et l'*Andromaque*.<sup>6</sup> La tradition veut qu'il ait conçu l'une des planches de la *Thébaïde*; dans la deuxième édition de l'ouvrage, celle de 1820, "quelques épreuves avant le titre de cette planche portent le nom de Prud'hon comme auteur du dessin; sur les épreuves avec le titre, ce nom a été remplacé par celui de Moitte qui a fait les quatre autres compositions pour la même tragédie."<sup>7</sup> A vrai dire, on ne reconnaît la main de Prud'hon dans aucune des compositions qui ornent la *Thébaïde*, et sa collaboration est ici très douteuse.

Mais Prud'hon avait entrepris d'illustrer *Andromaque*; et ceci est autrement intéressant.

Deux compositions, au moins, auraient pu être utilisées pour l'édition Didot, même si elles n'ont pas été conçues expressément pour elle. La première représente *Pyrrhus et Andromaque*, dans une scène du premier acte



FIG. 2. — PRUD'HON. — L'Apothéose de Racine, planche de l'édition Didot.

6. Voir: PONS, *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

7. CLÉMENT, *Op. cit.*, p. 249, note; cf. GUIFFREY, N<sup>o</sup>. 1062. Ni CLÉMENT, ni GUIFFREY n'indiquent de quelle planche il s'agit. D'après PONS (*Op. cit.*, p. 37) c'est la première, gravée par Dupréel: "Jocaste décide Etéocle à lui permettre de revoir Polynice" (Acte I, sc. 3, fin). En fait, l'épisode représenté est différent: "Jocaste épouvantée voit entrer Etéocle, couvert de sang." Les vers gravés au bas de la planche sont les suivants:

"... Ah! mon fils!

Quelles traces de sang vois-je sur vos habits?

Est-ce le sang d'un frère? ou n'est-ce point le vôtre?"

Ces vers sont bien tirés de l'Acte I, scène 3, mais du début de la scène, non de la fin.

(la scène 4). Pyrrhus tend des mains suppliantes vers sa belle captive; mais elle se détourne, toute en larmes, et se penche vers Céphise, en disant :

« . . . C'est un exil que mes pleurs vous demandent.  
Souffrez que loin des Grecs, et même loin de vous,  
J'aïlle cacher mon fils, et pleurer mon époux. »



FIG. 3. — Eurydice, Hermès et Orphée. — Musée de Naples.

Ces vers sont inscrits au bas d'un dessin aux crayons noir et blanc;<sup>8</sup> un second dessin, à la plume, qui faisait jadis partie de la Collection d'Anatole France,<sup>9</sup> et que possède aujourd'hui le Fogg Museum, représente le même sujet (Fig. 4).<sup>10</sup>

Ce dernier dessin fut exposé au Salon de 1793.<sup>11</sup> Il n'est pas probable que la composition ait été commandée, si longtemps à l'avance, pour l'édition Didot;<sup>12</sup> mais elle y eût tout naturellement trouvé place. Chacune des planches du *Racine* se présente tout à fait de cette manière, avec deux ou trois vers situant exactement la scène évoquée. De fait, il est possible que Prud'hon ait offert aux éditeurs son dessin, que Pélicier avait gravé à

8. GUIFFREY, n° 1065.

9. ANATOLE FRANCE a écrit une étude sur Prud'hon (*Oeuvres Complètes*, XXV, 1935, pp. 100-117; et *Bibliographie*, pp. 422-426), et rêvait de lui consacrer tout un ouvrage; son étude a paru comme préface à *P. P. Prud'hon*, 72 Reproductions de Léon Marotte . . . , Paris, 1923.

10. GUIFFREY, n° 1066. J'exprime toute ma reconnaissance à Miss AGNES MONGAN, qui m'a communiqué les dessins du Musée Fogg, et au Musée qui m'a permis de les reproduire.

11. Le *Livret* du Salon le décrit ainsi (n° 576): "Sujet tiré du premier acte d'*Andromaque*, par Prud'hon: *Souffrez que loin des Grecs, et même loin de vous J'aïlle cacher mon fils, et pleurer mon époux.*"

12. GUIFFREY, *Op. cit.*, p. 407, dit que dans l'édition de 1820 et les suivantes les DIDOT ajoutèrent le dessin des *Supplications d'Andromaque* qui fut commandé à cet effet. A cette date, le dessin (s'il s'agit bien du même) était vieux de vingt-sept ans. Je n'en ai pas trouvé trace dans l'édition de 1820 que j'ai consultée.



l'eau-forte en 1796;<sup>13</sup> mais ils le refusèrent, sans doute pour la raison donnée plus haut, c'est-à-dire, pour ne pas mécontenter David.<sup>14</sup>

Une autre scène d'*Andromaque* a inspiré à Prud'hon l'un de ses chefs-d'oeuvre. C'est un dessin à la pierre noire, avec des rehauts de blanc, aujourd'hui au Louvre (Fig. 7).<sup>15</sup> Andromaque, assise, serre contre son sein le petit Astyanax, qui vient de quitter les bras de sa nourrice. Debout derrière le siège d'Andromaque, Céphise les contemple, attendrie; et dans l'ombre, Pyrrhus, d'un grand geste,<sup>16</sup> montre la scène à Phénix. "C'est le moment où la veuve d'Hector pleure sur le sort de son fils dont les traits lui retracent vivement ceux de son époux :

"C'est Hector, disait-elle en l'embrassant toujours;

Voilà ses yeux, sa bouche et déjà son audace;

C'est lui-même, c'est toi, cher époux, que j'embrasse."<sup>17</sup>

Encore une admirable illustration, semble-t-il, pour le *Racine* de Didot: encore une qui n'y figure



FIG. 4. — PRUD'HON. — Pyrrhus et Andromaque, dessin à la plume. — Legs Winthrop, Musée Fogg, Université Harvard, Cambridge, Mass.

13. Selon E. DE GONCOURT, *L'Oeuvre de Prud'hon*, 1876, p. 247, cette gravure avait été faite précisément pour le *Racine*.

14. Voir: CLÉMENT, *Op. cit.*, p. 250; ANATOLE FRANCE (Fig. 5) répète l'affirmation de CLÉMENT; mais GUIFFREY (n° 252) prétend que "le dessin à la plume FUT UTILISÉ POUR L'ILLUSTRATION DU *RACINE* DE L'ÉDITION DIDOT." Veut-il parler de l'édition de 1820? Voir *supra*, note 12.

15. GUIFFREY, n° 252.

16. GUIFFREY (n° 249) paraît se méprendre sur le sens de ce geste: "Pyrrhus," dit-il, "tend les bras vers sa captive;" en réalité, ce geste exprime l'impatience et le dépit. Pyrrhus se plaint à Phénix de l'excessive fidélité d'Andromaque à la mémoire d'Hector.

17. Catalogue du Salon de 1817, p. 123. Ces vers sont tirés de l'Acte II, scène 5.

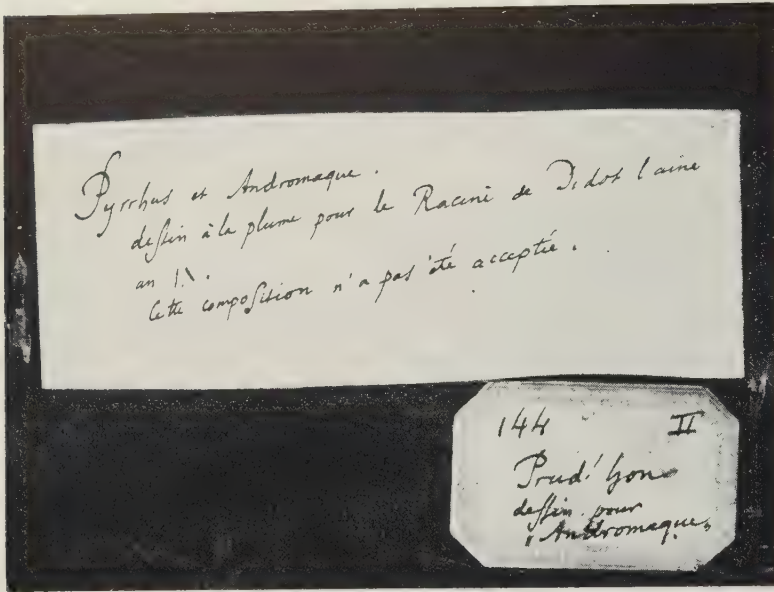


FIG. 5. — Note autographe d'Anatole France au dos du dessin *Pyrrhus et Andromaque* (Fig. 4)

pas; mais cette fois les raisons sont différentes.

D'abord le dessin n'est pas antérieur à 1814: il eût donc pu servir tout au plus à la seconde édition. En outre, c'était l'esquisse d'un tableau qui fut annoncé, mais non exposé, au Salon de 1817. Il existe d'autres esquisses, dont une sur toile,<sup>18</sup> et de multiples études de détail;<sup>19</sup> d'autres études ont disparu.<sup>20</sup> Quant au tableau lui-même, Prud'hon ne l'acheva jamais; il fut

exposé au Salon de 1824, après la mort de l'auteur, terminé, hélas! par M. de Boissremont. Cette composition, qui eût admirablement répondu aux exigences des Didot, n'avait donc pas été conçue pour eux. Prud'hon, comme je l'expliquerai plus loin, la destinait à l'Impératrice Marie-Louise.

Au total, deux scènes seulement de l'*Andromaque* racinienne ont inspiré Prud'hon.<sup>21</sup> C'est très peu; c'est trop peu, quand on voit ce qu'il a fait sur ce thème, — et ce que ses rivaux ont fait.

Feuilletons les planches de cette édition, qui devait être un monument au génie de Racine: l'impression est glaciale. "Les élèves de David ont encore renchéri sur leur maître. Les estampes ressemblent à des copies de bas-reliefs; elles présentent des personnages imposants, immobiles et froids comme le marbre, aux attitudes rectilignes. . ."<sup>22</sup> Ce trait sec, ce geste tendu, ces surfaces dures, tout cela choque ici comme des discordances, presque des incongruités; et l'on se rappelle le mot si juste de Delacroix: "On peut admirer dans l'école de David un grand dessin, parfois de l'ordonnance, comme dans Gérard; de la grandeur, de la fougue, du pathétique,

18. GUIFFREY, nos 250, 253; un autre dessin (n° 251) est peut-être une première pensée de la même scène. Andromaque n'est pas assise, mais agenouillée à terre à droite, de profil à gauche, près d'Astyanax debout devant elle, qu'une jeune femme paraît vouloir séparer de sa mère. Deux autres, à gauche, s'éloignent déjà tout en regardant derrière elles Andromaque et son fils.

19. GUIFFREY, nos 254-258 (figures de Pyrrhus, de la nourrice, de Céphise; mains et bras).

20. GUIFFREY, p. 93.

21. Il a traité plusieurs fois les sujets HOMÉRIQUES d'Hector et Andromaque. GUIFFREY (p. 89) mentionne un tableau de jeunesse, *Andromaque au Tombeau d'Hector*; deux petits tableaux donnés à Frochot, *Le Départ d'Hector* et *La Mort d'Hector* (nos 244 et 245); et le superbe dessin des *Adieux* (nos 246 et 247).

22. Pons, *Op. cit.*, p. 34.



comme dans Girodet. Mais le charme que la main de l'ouvrier ajoute à tous ces mérites est absent de leurs ouvrages. Chez eux, L'ÉPIDERME MANQUE PARTOUT.<sup>23</sup>

L'“épiderme” — la suavité du contour — voilà bien ce qui leur manque en effet. Or, voilà ce que Prud'hon et Racine ont d'abord en commun. Et c'est par là qu'ils sont “antiques,” eux aussi, mais à leur manière: non plus par la raideur sculpturale et la rigueur archéologique, mais par la lumière, et par la grâce.<sup>24</sup> Un même souffle d'Ionie, un même rayon élyséen les a caressés tous les deux. Le véritable sentiment plastique de l'antiquité respire chez Racine,<sup>25</sup> et Prud'hon est souvent tout proche, par l'esprit, de la Grèce du V<sup>e</sup> Siècle. Ce n'est point une coïncidence si, de ses deux dessins d'*Andromaque*, l'un (Fig. 4) rappelle l'*Eurydice* du Musée de Naples (Fig. 3), l'autre (Fig. 7) la stèle d'Hégésio (Fig. 6).<sup>26</sup> Avec toute leur exactitude, les élèves de David n'éveillent jamais de pareils souvenirs.

Et combien Prud'hon entre plus avant dans l'intelligence de l'auteur! Il est curieux de voir quels moments de la pièce Girodet, illustrateur d'*Andromaque*, a choisi d'évoquer: pour lui, la protagoniste est Hermione, qu'il représente trois fois, tantôt minaudière et tantôt courroucée. Andromaque elle-même n'apparaît qu'une fois: dans une scène d'un pathétique forcé, elle implore Pyrrhus qui la menace d'un geste conventionnel.<sup>27</sup> Prud'hon, avec l'instinct du cœur, a choisi deux épisodes tout frémissants de tendresse et de pitié; et il les interprète avec une justesse de sentiment qui reflète jusque dans ses nuances la physionomie d'Andromaque, telle que Racine l'a conçue.

La scène tirée du premier acte illustre, on s'en souvient, les vers suivants:

“... C'est un exil que MES PLEURS vous demandent.  
Souffrez que loin des Grecs, ET MEME LOIN DE VOUS,  
J'aie caché mon fils, et PLEURER mon époux.”

Par l'attitude même qu'il prête aux personnages, Prud'hon montre qu'il a pénétré les finesses du texte. Pyrrhus est tendre — trop tendre et trop pressant. Andromaque le repousse; mais elle prend soin d'adoucir son refus d'une flatterie délicate. C'est une veuve; mais c'est une femme aussi, consciente de son pouvoir et de ses attraits. Elle pleure; mais elle sait l'étrange séduction qu'exercent sur Pyrrhus des

23. DELACROIX, *Journal*, éd. FLAT, III, p. 249.

24. Cf. la réponse de Delacroix (*art. cit.*, p. 444) à un critique qui reprochait à Prud'hon de n'avoir adopté ni les formes, ni le goût, ni les principes de l'antique: “Ce qui caractérise l'antique, ce n'est pas l'isolement des figures et la sécheresse des draperies collées sur le nu. C'est l'ampleur des formes combinée avec le sentiment de la vie, c'est la largeur des plans et la grâce de l'ensemble.”

25. Voir dans P. DORBEC, *La Sensibilité Plastique et Picturale dans la Littérature du XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, “Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de la France,” 1919, pp. 374-395, des observations intéressantes sur les groupes plastiques chez Racine.

26. Voir: H. DIEPOLDER, *Die attischen Grabreliefs des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.*, Berlin 1931, pl. 20.

27. Cf. aussi le tableau de Guérin: *Pyrrhus prenant Andromaque et Astyanax sous sa Protection*.

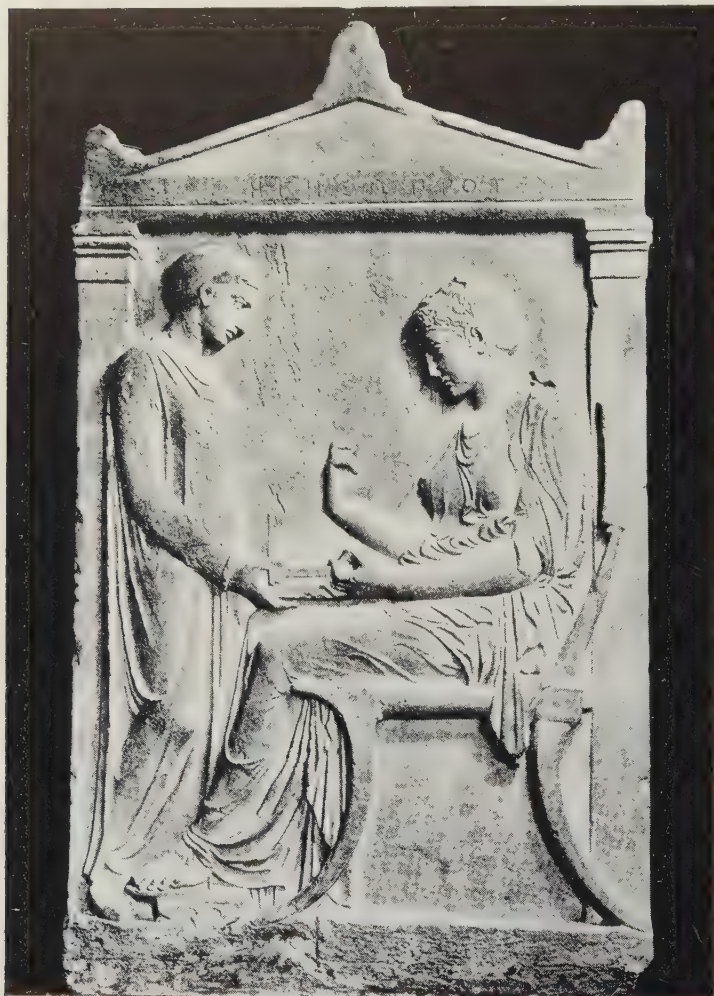


FIG. 6. — LA STÈLE D'HÉGÉSÔ. — Musée Céramique, Athènes.

l'*Andromaque* de Racine pour montrer comment, dans ce sujet païen, s'est glissée à l'insu même du poète une nuance de pathétique, inconnue à l'Antiquité. "Les sentiments les plus touchants de l'*Andromaque* de Racine émanent pour la plupart d'un poète chrétien. L'*Andromaque* de l'*Iliade* est plus épouse que mère; celle d'Euripide a un caractère à la fois rampant et ambitieux, qui détruit le caractère maternel; celle de Virgile est tendre et triste, mais c'est moins encore la mère que l'épouse.

yeux voilés de larmes.<sup>28</sup>

L'autre composition de Prud'hon représente Andromaque et son fils. Dans la tragédie, l'enfant reste invisible; mais son image ne cesse pas de hanter le spectateur. Andromaque l'évoque dès ses premiers mots:

"Je passais jusqu'aux lieux où  
l'on garde mon fils . . .

Je ne l'ai point encore embrassé d'aujourd'hui."

Et Pyrrhus lui-même décrit avec une amertume jalouse les réunions de la mère et de l'enfant:

"C'est Hector, disait-elle,  
en l'embrassant toujours;  
Voilà ses yeux, sa bouche, et  
déjà son audace;

C'est lui-même, c'est toi, cher  
époux, que j'embrasse."

Ici encore, Prud'hon a perçu la poésie et l'émotion de la scène jusque dans leurs vibrations secrètes.

Chateaubriand a choisi

28. Voir les expressions révélatrices d'Andromaque (Acte I, scène 4):

"Quels charmes ont pour vous des yeux infortunés  
Qu'à des pleurs éternels vous avez condamnés?"

et de Pyrrhus lui-même (Acte III, scène 8):

"Oui, je sens à regret qu'en excitant vos larmes  
Je ne fais contre moi que vous donner des armes."

Cf. les observations ingénieuses de A. THIBAUDET, *Les Larmes de Racine*, dans "La Nouvelle Revue Française," 1932, pp. 890-1900.





FIG. 7. — PRUD'HON. — Andromaque. — Louvre, Paris.

L'Andromaque de Racine est plus sensible, plus intéressante que l'Andromaque antique. Ce vers si simple et si aimable — “Je ne l'ai point encore embrassé d'aujourd'hui” — est le mot d'une mère chrétienne: cela n'est point dans le goût des Grecs et des Romains. L'Andromaque d'Homère gémit sur les malheurs futurs d'Astyanax, mais songe à peine à lui dans le présent; la mère, sous notre culte, plus tendre sans être moins prévoyante, oublie quelquefois ses chagrins en donnant un baiser à son fils. Les Anciens n'arrêtaient pas longtemps les yeux sur l'enfance. Il n'y a que le Dieu de l'Evangile qui ait osé nommer sans rougir les petits enfants, “*parvuli*” — “*Et accipiens puerum, statuit eum in medio eorum.*”<sup>29</sup>

L'argumentation de Chateaubriand est spécieuse; mais il est bien vrai que la sensibilité moderne se fond, chez Racine, avec le *pathos* antique. Cette fusion délicate, Prud'hon la réalise à son tour. Le groupe central de sa composition rappelle,

29. *Le Génie du Christianisme*, II, 2, 6. Cf. TAINÉ, *Les Trois Andromaqes*, dans: GIRAUD, *Taine*, pp. 183-215.



FIG. 8. — RAPHAËL. — Le Parnasse (détail).

nous l'avons dit,<sup>30</sup> l'une de ces stèles funéraires de l'Attique où les morts et les vivants s'entretiennent avec une grave douceur; Andromaque elle-même a le profil d'une Athéna pensive; mais son geste est celui d'une Madone,<sup>31</sup> et l'artiste s'émeut devant la faiblesse de la femme, l'innocence de l'enfant promis à un destin tragique: il trahit, pour parler comme Chateaubriand, "une tendre sympathie avec le génie des mères."

\* \* \*

C'est pour une mère, d'ailleurs, qu'il avait conçu cette scène: ce dessin n'est que l'ébauche d'un tableau destiné à l'Impératrice Marie-Louise.<sup>32</sup>

Les circonstances ne sont pas complètement éclaircies; il semble qu'après la chute de

Napoléon, en 1814, Marie-Louise, réfugiée à la cour d'Autriche, ait elle-même demandé à Prud'hon une *Andromaque*: le tableau, naturellement, devait être une allusion à son propre sort, et Prud'hon le conçut comme tel (Fig. 13).<sup>33</sup> Il existe une lettre de Schoenbrunn, datée du 8 Décembre 1814, où l'Impératrice approuve le projet soumis par le peintre.<sup>34</sup>

Bon et naïf Prud'hon! Il ne soupçonnait pas combien la fausse veuve de Schoenbrunn était indigne d'un tel hommage. Il se souvenait, sans doute, des jours heureux, et s'attendrissait. C'est lui-même qui, naguère, avait exécuté les décorations de l'Hôtel de Ville pour le mariage impérial (Fig. 12); et c'est lui qui avait, hélas!

30. Voir: *supra*, p. 15 et note 26. Cf. encore la stèle de Polyxène, *Ibid.*, pl. 40.

31. Cf. un autre dessin de Prud'hon, *La Reine Hortense et ses Enfants*.

32. Voir: *supra*, p. 14.

33. Voir: E. BRICON, *Prud'hon*, pp. 55 et 108; GUIFFREY, n° 249.

34. E. DE GONCOURT, *Op. cit.*, p. 116.



dessiné le berceau du Roi de Rome. Son *Andromaque* était comme un gage poignant de ses souvenirs.

Nous saisissons ici "l'un de ces liens ténus qui relient toute oeuvre d'art à la vie réelle." Déjà, dans l'*Andromaque* de Racine, la légende rejoignait l'histoire contemporaine: la veuve d'Hector, dans la tragédie, ressemble parfois à la veuve de Charles I,<sup>35</sup> Henriette de France.

Racine, en 1667, avait dédié sa pièce à la fille de cette Henriette de France; et il rappelle, dans son *Epître Dédicatoire*, qu'en l'écoutant la princesse avait pleuré. Peut-être l'histoire de cette veuve fidèle, de cette mère martyrisée, éveillait-elle dans son âme des



FIG. 9. — DAVID. — Le Serment du Jeu de Paume, dessin. — Legs Winthrop, Musée Fogg, Université Harvard, Cambridge, Mass. (détail).



FIG. 10. — PRUD'HON. — Le Séjour de l'Immortalité, détail du dessin du Musée Fogg (Fig. 1).

échos douloureux; en tout cas, certaines scènes, certains vers devaient lui paraître autant d'allusions: les adieux d'Hector, et la séparation déchirante de Charles et d'Henriette, en 1644; sa mort ignominieuse, et l'échafaud de Whitehall; les rares entretiens de la mère et du fils, jalousement limités par Pyrrhus, et les visites du Prince de Galles à sa mère, jugées "trop fréquentes" par le Parlement; l'ambassade d'Oreste venant réclamer Astyanax "réfugié" à la cour d'Epire, comme Cromwell avait réclaté à la cour de France le fils de Charles I. Le caractère même des deux héroïnes appelait la comparaison: Andromaque, veuve inconsolable, mère craintive,

35. Voir: J. E. MOREL, *La Vivante Andromaque*, dans: "Revue d'Histoire Littéraire de France," 1924, pp. 604-619.

est une femme fine et forte; Henriette de France, malgré son deuil perpétuel, sut à l'occasion séduire, et commander; elle sut même (comme Andromaque, toujours!) replacer son fils sur le trône; l'histoire, comme la tragédie, s'achève par une restauration.

Marie-Louise était loin, trop loin de son modèle antique; et Prud'hon, malgré sa candeur, dut finalement s'en apercevoir. Le fait est qu'après avoir longuement préparé son tableau, il l'abandonna: "peut-être la différence des situations l'amena-t-elle à négliger son projet."<sup>36</sup>

Et pourtant, l'allusion reste émouvante; et elle n'était pas entièrement gratuite. Car le Duc de Reichstadt adolescent et prisonnier lisait Racine, et songeait à son père.<sup>37</sup> Rostand le représente, dans l'*Aiglon*, frémissant aux vers d' *Andromaque*:

"Leur haine pour Hector n'est pas encore éteinte;  
Ils redoutent son fils."<sup>38</sup>

D'autre part nous savons, et par des témoins sûrs, ce qui se passait à Sainte-Hélène, quelques années auparavant. Merveilleuse ubiquité du génie! Racine, le même Racine, faisait vibrer le cœur du grand exilé. Le *Mémorial* nous apprend qu' *Andromaque* était "une de ses passions."<sup>39</sup> Et Antonmarchi nous rapporte la scène poignante à laquelle il assista le 13 Octobre 1819. Ce jour-là, Napoléon avait demandé à son Docteur de lui faire la lecture:

"... Mais voilà Racine; docteur, vous êtes sur la scène; allons, j'écoute *Andromaque*. C'est la pièce des pères malheureux. Commencez."

"J'hésitais; il prit l'ouvrage, en lut quelques vers, et le laissa presque aussitôt retomber de ses mains. Il était tombé sur ces vers fameux:

'Je passais jusqu'aux lieux où l'on garde mon fils.  
Puisqu'une fois le jour vous souffrez que je voie  
Le seul bien qui me reste et d'Hector et de Troie,  
J'allais, Seigneur, pleurer un moment avec lui.  
Je ne l'ai point encore embrassé d'aujourd'hui.'

Il était attendri, ému, il se couvrit la tête. 'Docteur,' me dit-il, 'je suis trop affecté, laissez-moi.' Je me retirai."<sup>40</sup>

36. GUIFFREY, n° 249.

37. Il donna au maréchal Marmont son portrait, et il écrivit au-dessous quatre vers de *Phèdre*:

"Arrivé près de moi par un zèle sincère,  
Tu me contais alors l'histoire de mon père;  
Tu sais combien mon âme, attentive à ta voix,  
S'échauffait au récit de ses nobles exploits."

Voir O. AUBRY, *Le Roi de Rome*, p. 331.

38. *Andromaque*, I, 4; *L'Aiglon*, I, 7.

39. LAS CASES, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, éd. LA PLÉIADE, I, p. 652.

40. F. ANTONMARCHI, *Derniers Moments de Napoléon, ou Complément du Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, Bruxelles, 1825, I, pp. 162-163.



Ce n'est pas à Marie-Louise que Prud'hon aurait dû, en bonne justice, dédier son *Andromaque* : c'est à Napoléon.

\* \* \* \*

Au frontispice de l'édition Didot (Fig. 2), Prud'hon avait conduit Racine à l'Immortalité. Il existe un projet de composition où, de nouveau, le peintre a placé le poète dans un Olympe idéal.

En 1808, Prud'hon avait été chargé d'une vaste entreprise : la décoration d'une salle de distribution de prix, à la Sorbonne. Le sujet choisi était *le Séjour de l'Immortalité* ; il nous en reste deux esquisses ; un dessin du Musée de Chantilly, aux crayons noir et blanc sur papier bleuté ;<sup>41</sup> un second dessin, à la plume et au lavis d'encre de Chine sur papier calque, aujourd'hui au Musée Fogg (Figs. 1, 10 et 11).<sup>42</sup>

En haut d'un large escalier, l'Immortalité, assise sur un trône, appelle les hommes de génie pour leur décerner des couronnes ; autour d'elle se pressent les poètes épiques, lyriques, et tragiques, et les peintres mêlés aux Muses ; un peu plus bas, sur les marches, un groupe de poètes érotiques. Au premier plan, à gauche, la Sagesse (Minerve) dévoile la Nature à plusieurs sectes de philosophes ;<sup>43</sup> à droite, l'Astronomie, au milieu d'un cercle de savants, enseigne les lois de l'Univers. "C'est," dit Delacroix,<sup>44</sup> "une pensée analogue à l'*Ecole d'Athènes* ; les diverses facultés y sont représentées avec leurs emblèmes respectifs."

Le rapprochement s'impose ; en fait une comparaison attentive révèle que Prud'hon s'inspire ici, non seulement de l'*Ecole d'Athènes*, mais aussi du *Parnasse* (Fig. 8), et même, semble-t-il, de la *Dispute du Saint-Sacrement*. A l'*Ecole d'Athènes*, Prud'hon a emprunté le cadre et les grandes lignes de la composition : l'escalier à deux étages, les bases du portique et des statues (le portique lui-même manque : la forme de la surface à décorer privait Prud'hon d'espace en hauteur). Les groupes du premier plan sont massés de la même façon. Comme chez Raphaël, un personnage assis en oblique sur les marches relie les deux étages de la composition.



FIG. 11. — PRUD'HON. — Le Séjour de l'Immortalité, détail du dessin du Musée Fogg (Fig. 1).

41. GUIFFREY, n° 899. Voir reprod. dans l'étude du MARQUIS DE CHENNEVIÈRES, *Les Dessins de Maîtres Anciens Exposés à l'Ecole des Beaux-Arts en 1879*, p. 131.

42. GUIFFREY, n° 890.

43. Ce détail rappelle le frontispice de l'*Encyclopédie* : *La Raison et la Philosophie enlèvent le Voile de la Vérité*.

44. *Art. cité*, p. 441.

Certaines figures sont simplement transposées : ainsi le penseur, à gauche ; à droite, Zoroastre, et le visage de l'astronome assis près de la mappemonde, qui se retourne pour écouter. Enfin, le geste de l'Immortalité rappelle celui de Platon.

Au *Parnasse*, Prud'hon a emprunté l'idée générale du groupement des poètes, des artistes et des Muses, et quelques attitudes : ainsi le personnage assis à gauche, dans une pose inspirée, auprès de l'Immortalité (Fig. 10) ; celui qui se retourne, en bas à droite (Fig. 11) (celui-là même auquel il a prêté le visage du jeune astronome de l'*Ecole*) ; le geste de la Comédie, etc.

Dans la *Dispute*, le personnage de gauche, qui montre des deux mains l'autel, paraît avoir servi de modèle pour le philosophe de Prud'hon, qui montre la statue de la Nature ; celui qui s'appuie au piédestal, dans l'angle de droite, se retrouve aussi chez Prud'hon.



FIG. 12. — PRUD'HON. — Les Muses, Dessin rehaussé de blanc, peut-être conçu pour les Décorations de l'Hôtel de Ville. — Legs Winthrop, Musée Fogg, Université Harvard, Cambridge, Mass.

Toutes ces réminiscences sont naturelles : nul n'avait, avec plus de recueillement que Prud'hon, étudié et pénétré la noble ordonnance des grandes fresques de Raphaël. Mais il reste à identifier les acteurs de la scène.

Chennevières et Guiffrey "reconnaissent," parmi les savants : Archimède, Galilée, Descartes, Newton ; parmi les peintres, Raphaël, Corrège, Michel-Ange et Poussin ; parmi les poètes, Homère, Virgile, Euripide, Sophocle, Corneille, et Racine. Mais lequel est Racine ?

Deux personnages peuvent le représenter. L'un est assis tout seul, de biais, sur les marches, aux pieds de l'Immortalité ; l'autre, la plume en main, dans une attitude inspirée, semble écouter la voix de la Déesse.<sup>45</sup> Il semble que le premier

45. Ce personnage (voir *supra*) est emprunté au *Parnasse* ; David l'avait déjà utilisé pour son *Serment du Jeu de Paume* (Fig. 9).





FIG. 13. — PRUD'HON ET DE BOISFREMONT. — Andromaque. — Musée Metropolitain, New York.

de ces deux poètes soit plutôt l'indépendant La Fontaine, qui n'appartient à aucun genre classique (d'où son isolement). Le second, au contraire, siège parmi les siens, c'est-à-dire parmi les poètes dramatiques: Melpomène, debout devant lui, se détourne pour le regarder;<sup>46</sup> enfin, le vieillard au front découvert, qui se penche pour lire par-dessus son épaule, ressemble vaguement à Corneille. Selon toute vraisemblance, c'est bien Racine, que Prud'hon, une fois de plus, a mis à la place d'honneur.

Le grand tableau dont nous venons d'étudier l'esquisse ne fut jamais exécuté; et il est difficile de connaître précisément la raison qui empêcha Prud'hon de donner suite à son projet. "Il était souffrant à cette époque," explique Delacroix,<sup>47</sup> "et sans doute mal disposé pour une vaste entreprise. Peut-être à l'aspect de cette grande toile toute prête à recevoir son idée manqua-t-il de confiance; peut-être

46. De même la Comédie se retourne pour regarder un personnage qui rit, et qui doit être Molière.

47. *Art. cité*, p. 441.

fallait-il, pour le confirmer dans le sentiment de sa force, le succès de son tableau de *La Justice et la Vengeance Divine Poursuivant le Crime*."

Une fois de plus, nous en sommes réduits aux conjectures, et aux regrets : cette grande page eût marqué un sommet dans l'oeuvre de Prud'hon ; elle eût été son *Apothéose d'Homère*.

Mais la vertu des dessins de Prud'hon et de ses moindres esquisses est qu'ils suffisent à faire longuement rêver. On rêve de cette *Apothéose*, non moins noble que celle d'Ingres, mais plus vaporeuse, avec des ombres corrégienues ; on rêve de ce *Racine*, à jamais inachevé, où ces douces victimes, Iphigénie, Monime, Junie et Bérénice, eussent enfin trouvé, comme Andromaque, le visage qui convient à leur voix. Et puisque Delacroix, à son tour, projeta d'illustrer Racine,<sup>48</sup> on imagine les deux artistes associés dans une collaboration idéale où Delacroix, laissant à Prud'hon l'harmonie et la tendresse, se fût réservé l'éclat, la violence, et la terreur.

January 17, 1944.

JEAN J. SEZNEC.



48. V. *Journal*, éd. JOUBIN, III, p. 194 ; 23 Mai 1858 : "Projets : Athalie interroge Eliacin. Junie entraînée par les soldats. Néron l'observe, flambeaux, etc." Ces deux scènes ont été choisies, mais froidement traitées, par les illustrateurs de l'édition DIDOT.





# *HAMLET OR CHILDE HAROLD?* **DELACROIX AND BYRON**

— II —\*

'T is to create, and in creating live  
A being more intense, that we endow  
With form our fancy, gaining as we give  
The life we image, even as I do now.

*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, III, 6.

**T**HE years of artistic theory and practice which have intervened between us and the painters of the early XIX Century have witnessed the formulation of two attitudes in criticism and execution which inevitably interfere to some extent with our comprehension of the pictorial purposes of Romanticism. In terms of form and content the progressive obliteration of narrative in Impressionism and the proportionately insistent concentration on problems of formal design in Post-Impressionism and Cubism have induced the contemporary spectator to disregard themes of literary origin and to distrust forms which are determined by other than purely formal considerations. While this attitude has had the wholesome effect of enabling us to detect the artistic inadequacy of most illustrative painting, it has had a less happy result when applied to the work of

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\* The first part of this article, *Eugène Delacroix and Lord Byron* appeared in the February, 1943 issue of the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts."

the greatest of the Romantic artists, Eugène Delacroix. Of all the French masters since 1789 who have exercised a crucial influence on the direction of modern art, Delacroix alone commands a respect still untempered by the enthusiasm we accord the others. Unlike his life-long rival, Ingres, whose historical paintings may be as little to our taste today, Delacroix left us no coherent group of non-literary works, such as portraits, where we might study the progression of his design unhampered by literary or historical allusions of no immediate cogency. Our reluctance to accept the Romantic program is not merely a matter of our ignorance of Romantic subject matter, nor may we, as Americans, plead the inaccessibility of his major works. Even in the final presence of such masterpieces as the *Scènes des Massacres de Scio* or of *La Mort de Sardanapale* we are bewildered. These prodigal accumulations of unfamiliar form and content refuse to conform to the standards which were applicable to Manet and Matisse. We have no choice but to reject the paintings, difficult indeed in the face of their imperious authority, or to revise our standards, a process which requires the redefinition of Romantic art within the framework of contemporary criticism.<sup>1</sup>

Toward this end the following paragraphs are directed with the intention of demonstrating that the organic unity of a Romantic work of art is not explicable in terms of formal order alone. The forms of Romantic painting submit to the exigencies of the particular content they were created to express. Until that content is not only identified but comprehended, the forms will remain powerless to exert the full measure of their significance. Before a new and more liberal criticism can be constructed the iconography of the Romantic experience must be accurately determined. This can only be accomplished by purging it of subsequent, and usually superfluous, interpretation, and by determining, as systematically as possible, the values of the various symbols which are used for the projection of the Romantic content. Then and then only, when we have acknowledged the appositeness of the "fancy" shall we be in a position to criticize the form with which it has been "endowed."

For this preliminary investigation of Romantic symbolism we have selected a small but pertinent example from among the youthful works of Eugène Delacroix, a painting which has been unusually subject to misinterpretation during the sixty years of its recorded history. Since it was never published or exhibited until twenty years after the artist's death, its appearance, sixty years after it was created, coincided with the development of Impressionist and later criticism, and with the codification of post-Romantic conceptions of Romanticism. Our immedi-

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1. These considerations are based on a study of the critical reaction in the press to the work of Delacroix in public exhibitions, here and abroad, during the last quarter-century. Since the analysis which follows impinges upon little-known aspects of literary and dramatic history, the complete documentation is offered in the footnotes. While the writer is aware that further material may be supplied from archives unavailable while research was in progress, he is encouraged by the fact that all additional evidence has tended to confirm the original hypothesis.



ate obligation is to examine it afresh in the light of its historical documentation and in terms of the inextricable interrelation of form and content in Romantic painting. If the end appears to justify the means we shall assume that the method may be applied to more notable examples of the Romantic experience.

\* \* \*

One of Delacroix's earliest extant works is a small painting of a young man dressed in a black XVII Century costume with a cloak thrown over his shoulders (Fig. 1).<sup>2</sup> He stands, his left leg slightly advanced, beside a large rectangular object upon which rest his right forearm and hand. His left hand emerges from the folds of the cloak to grasp a dagger hanging from his waist. The somberness of his costume is relieved by a white collar over which falls his long dark hair. A light semi-circular area in the greenish wall behind him may represent an archway. The painting, which is neither signed nor dated, was purchased by Alfred Robaut the day after the posthumous sale in 1875 of the property of J.-A. Carrier, the miniaturist to whom Delacroix had given it. Robaut, who first published it in 1885 in his *L'Oeuvre Complet d'Eugène Delacroix* as a self-portrait, believed that the word "Raveswood" (*sic*), written in pencil on the



FIG. 1. — EUGÈNE DELACROIX. — Self-Portrait. — Louvre, Paris.

2. A. ROBOUT AND E. CHESNEAU, *L'Oeuvre Complet d'Eugène Delacroix*, Paris, 1885, No. 40. Oil on canvas, 40 x 31 cm. Collections: Carrier, Robaut, Chéramy, Jamot, Louvre.

stretcher, referred to the unhappy lover of Scott's Lucy Ashton in *The Bride of Lammermoor*. Although he described the costume as in the style of Velasquez, he assumed that Delacroix had here represented himself in the character of Ravenswood. Closer study invalidated such a reading. Delacroix, respecting the proprieties of historical painting, usually took care to have each costume reasonably accurate.<sup>3</sup> This XVII Century Spanish dress would ill become the fictional Ravenswood, since the novel is laid in early XVIII Century Scotland. The discovery that "Ravenswood" was the nickname given Carrier by Delacroix and his friends indicated that the inscription refers not to the subject of the painting but to its original owner.<sup>4</sup>

That the subject is Delacroix himself there can be no doubt. Although the head (Fig. 2) is almost miniature in size, here are the widely-spaced and deeply-set eyes, and the same vigorous dark brows of the *Louvre Self-Portrait* painted between 1835 and 1839 (Fig. 3).<sup>5</sup> Even more convincing is the fact that the nose, the protruding lower lip, and the prominent pointed chin are proportionally identical with the splendid profile photograph made by Petit in 1862 (Fig. 4). Truly this is Delacroix, but in what guise, and for what reason has he thus so strangely displayed himself?

Given a young man of melancholy aspect, dressed in the fashion of the early XVII Century and standing in a vaguely medieval setting, the spectator almost

inevitably recalls that most melancholy of all young men of the 1600's, Prince Hamlet. And it is as the *Portrait d'Eugène Delacroix en Costume d'Hamlet* that the painting has been widely published and exhibited<sup>6</sup> in recent years. The title is superficially attractive. Even without the evidence of Delacroix's introspective unhappiness during the



FIG. 2. — EUGÈNE DELACROIX. — Self-Portrait, detail.

3. Edgar Ravenswood in the lithograph of 1829, *La Fiancée de Lammermoor* (LOYS-DELTEIL, *Le Peintre-Graveur Illustré*, III [1908], No. 83), wears a dress very different from that in the *Self-Portrait*.

4. The fact is presented, without detail, by PAUL JAMOT in the article cited below, n. 13.

5. So dated by G. BRIERE, *Catalogue des Peintures, Ecole Française*, Paris, Musée du Louvre, 1924, p. 79, No. 214. L. HOURTICQ, in *Delacroix, l'Oeuvre du Maître*, Paris, 1930, retains ROBAUT's date of 1829 which appears too early. In the catalogue of the Louvre exhibition of 1930 it was placed among the works of 1836-1837 (No. 81).

6. Notably: *Exposition Eugène Delacroix*, Paris, Musée du Louvre, 1930 (No. 5); *Exhibition of French Art, 1200-1900*, London, Royal Academy, 1932 (No. 358).





FIG. 3. — EUGÈNE DELACROIX. — Self-Portrait. — Louvre, Paris.

*petite toile est d'autant plus précieuse qu'elle date de 1821 . . . Ce mystérieux Hamlet est la première déclaration d'amour de Delacroix à Shakespeare,"*<sup>7</sup> is misleading on two counts. One is asked to accept, without further discussion, a date which rests solely on the uncorroborated authority of Robaut and which is earlier than Delacroix's first important signed and dated work, the *Dante et Virgile aux Enfers* of 1822. Signed and dated works of these early years are rare, and for 1821 the only documented painting is the *Vierge du Sacré-Coeur*, now in Ajaccio but be-

7. In addition to the works mentioned later, the most significant are: versions of *La Mort d'Ophélie* of 1838, 1844, and 1859; *Hamlet et les Deux Fossoyeurs* of 1839 and 1859.

8. J.-L. VAUDOYER, *L'Exposition l'Art et la Vie Romantiques*, in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," VII (1923), p. 196.

1820's, the considerable number of works inspired by *Hamlet* which he executed throughout his life might suggest such a reference.<sup>7</sup> When doubts have arisen they have usually been dismissed by an appeal to such psychological and iconographical postulations. Thus, if it is indeed Delacroix as Hamlet, how much must it then reveal of the artist's personality! Such, in outline, has been the substance of recent criticism.

Two facts must be kept in mind. While there is no reason to doubt that this is a self-portrait, the painting is not dated, nor is there any documentary evidence that Delacroix was here portraying himself as Hamlet. Such an apparently plausible statement as that made by Jean-Louis Vaudoyer in 1923, "*Cette*

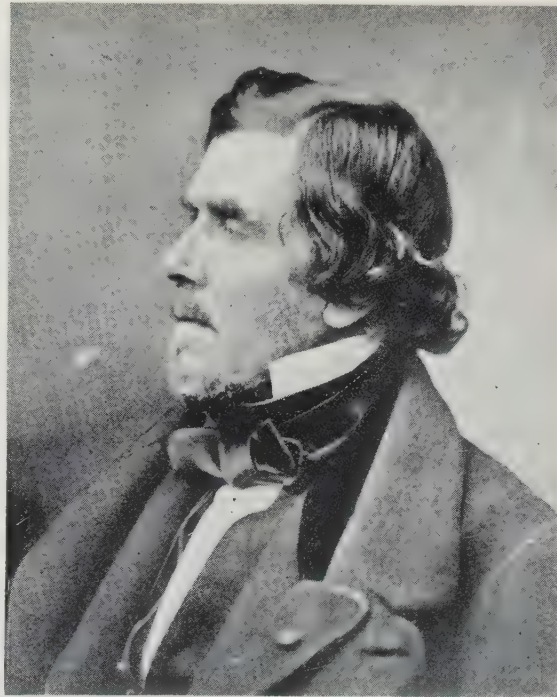


FIG. 4. — Eugène Delacroix in 1862, photograph.

lieved lost when Robaut proposed his date. Also, on the basis of this unsupported date we are prevailed upon to believe that in 1821 Delacroix was so familiar with Shakespeare that he depicted himself as Hamlet, an attitude he never assumed in any of the numerous Hamlet scenes executed later.

This Shakespearean hypothesis could not long rest unchallenged. Raymond Escholier in 1926,<sup>9</sup> and again in 1928,<sup>10</sup> expressed his doubts. In the latter year Paul Jamot, whose interest in the painting as its owner was understandable, attempted to refute Escholier by begging the question: "*On sait avec quelle prédilection Delacroix s'est fait à différentes époques de sa vie, tantôt en peinture, tantôt en dessin, ou en lithographie, le peintre de l'énigmatique et malheureux Prince de Danemark. Pour la première fois où, mettant sa personne dans une peinture de sa façon, il cherche un déguisement, ce déguisement n'est-il pas une révélation?*"<sup>11</sup>

No affirmative answer was heard. Claude Roger-Marx could not have been entirely satisfied when, in 1932, he wrote: "*Dès 1821, il se représentait en costume d'Hamlet (tel est du moins le titre sous lequel ce charmant portrait si romantique a figuré au Musée du Louvre).*"<sup>12</sup> Finally, in 1935, Jamot provided a detailed reply to the critics in a communication read before the *Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français*.<sup>13</sup> After reviewing the history of the painting and refuting Robaut's contention that it represented Edgar Ravenswood, Jamot acknowledged Robaut's acuity in noting that the costume suggested Velasquez, but added that he might just as well have named Shakespeare as the Spanish painter. His conclusions are quoted in full, since they provide the only grounds for the assumption that the painting represents Delacroix as Hamlet:

*"Ainsi nous est rendue toute liberté de maintenir une tradition infiniment plus satisfaisante pour notre imagination et pour l'idée que nous nous faisons des pensées et des rêveries qui occupaient l'esprit de jeune Delacroix, à l'heure où s'éveillait son génie. Cette tradition nous montre Delacroix à vingt-trois ans se représentant sous les traits de cet Hamlet, création admirée entre toutes d'un grand poète entre tous admiré, de cet Hamlet dont il fut si longtemps hanté. La petite toile de 1821 est à la fois le plus ancien des portraits peints d'Eugène Delacroix, le premier de ses Hamlets et sa première oeuvre de grand peintre."*

9. R. ESCHOLIER, *Delacroix, Peintre, Graveur, Ecrivain*, Paris, 3 vols., 1926-29, I, p. 55, n. 1. He accepts the Ravenswood inscription and adds: "*C'est à dire que Delacroix ne songeait nullement alors à se représenter en Hamlet.*"

10. IBID., *A propos d'une Exposition Delacroix*, in: "L'Art Vivant," IV (1928), p. 127. "*Faut-il croire que le jeune artiste est représenté en Hamlet comme le porte le catalogue? C'est fort douteux.*"

11. P. JAMOT, *Delacroix, Le Romantisme et l'Art*, Paris, 1928, p. 123. The second sentence quoted above was inserted, without identification, in the entry for the painting in the catalogue of the Louvre exhibition in 1930.

12. C. ROGER-MARX, *Géricault, Delacroix et l'Angleterre*, in: "L'Art Vivant," VIII (1932), p. 245.

13. P. JAMOT, *Eugène Delacroix en Costume d'Hamlet*, in: "Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de l'Art Français," Paris, 1935, pp. 41-44.





FIG. 5. — CARRENO DE MIRANDA. — Charles II of Spain. — Formerly in the Château d'Eu.

been painted at any time before 1832, when Delacroix's style underwent a pronounced change after his visit to Morocco. Indeed, a later date was soon proposed. In 1936 André Joubin suggested 1825, apparently on the basis of Delacroix's visits to the theatre in London in the summer of that year. This experience did not, however, include *Hamlet*.<sup>14</sup> In 1937 the painting was shown

While few have shown themselves more energetic in promoting the cause of Delacroix in modern times than Paul Jamot, his argument must be examined with care. It is as undemonstrable that this is a work executed in 1821, as it is difficult to prove that the figure represents Hamlet. Let us remember that evidence for the date of 1821 is lacking, and that the only known painting of that year, the *Vierge du Sacré-Coeur*, is so foreign in spirit and execution to Delacroix's subsequent work that it cannot be used for purposes of stylistic or iconographical comparison. That the painting is apparently an unfinished study dating from the earlier years of the artist's activity, means only that it could have

14. A. JOUBIN, *Les Modèles de Delacroix*, in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," XV (1936), p. 351. During his visit to London between May and August 1825 Delacroix saw several Shakespearean dramas. From letters of June 27 and August 1 it is apparent that he attended performances of *Richard III*, *Othello*, *The Tempest*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, but that he failed to see *Hamlet*. Since the only advertised performance of *Hamlet* occurred at Covent Garden on June 27, it is possible that he never saw the play until 1827 in Paris.



FIG. 6. — EUGÈNE DELACROIX. — *Copie d'après Velasquez*. — Collection Rivet, Paris.

Robaut had suggested the resemblance of the costume to that worn by many subjects in portraits by Velasquez. In the *Journal* for 1824 there is evidence that Delacroix was much interested in Velasquez and was actually engaged in copying a portrait which he believed to be by that master (Fig. 5).<sup>17</sup> On March 25

at an exhibition in Delacroix's *atelier* under the date "*vers 1824*."<sup>15</sup> Thus it is apparent that both the ascription to Hamlet and the date have been seriously questioned by many who have known the portrait well. In the face of such doubts and hesitations the problem of the title and date must be re-examined. Of the two, that of the date requires first consideration. If we could discover when Delacroix painted this *Self-Portrait* we could then relate it to the circumstances of his life at that time. In the ensuing inquiry we shall have the inestimable advantage of using the admirable editions of the artist's *Journal* and letters, edited by André Joubin and published since the controversy first arose.<sup>16</sup>

\* \* \*

We have already noted that

15. Catalogue, *Tableaux, Aquarelles . . .*, Paris, *Appartement et atelier d'Eugène Delacroix*, 1937 (*chambre à coucher*, No. 4).

16. A. JOUBIN, ed., *Journal d'Eugène Delacroix*, Paris, 3 vols., 1932; *Correspondance Générale d'Eugène Delacroix*, Paris, 5 vols., 1936-38. Subsequent references to the *Journal* and *Correspondance* will be identified only by the date of the appropriate entry or letter.

17. JOUBIN, in the *Correspondance*, I, p. 72, n. 1, has identified the so-called Velasquez as a portrait of Charles II of Spain by Juan Carreño de Miranda (1614-1685), subsequently in the Collection of the Duc de Vendôme at the Château d'Eu. It was sold at the Hôtel Drouot the 4 December 1931. Since this is the portrait mentioned by J. VATOUT in his *Le Château d'Eu, Notices Historiques*, Paris, 1836, IV, p. 101, No. 252, it must be identical with the portrait in the same author's *Catalogue Historique et Descriptif des Tableaux appartenans . . . (au) Duc d'Orléans*, Paris, 4 vols., 1823-26, II (1825), p. 423, No. 166, where it is recorded as being then in the Palais Royal. Since a year earlier it had been correctly attributed to Carreño in the *Indicateur de la Galerie des Tableaux . . . au Palais Royal*, it is odd that Delacroix should have mistaken it for a Velasquez. The episode is perhaps indicative of the character of his relations with the Orléans family at this time.



a friend had taken him to see this so-called Velasquez. He was so impressed that on April 11 he obtained permission to copy it, and recorded his appreciation of Velasquez' technique:<sup>18</sup>

*"J'en suis tout possédé. Voilà ce que j'ai cherché si longtemps, cet empâté ferme et pourtant fondu. Ce qu'il faut principalement se rappeler, ce sont les mains; il me semble qu'en joignant cette manière de peindre à des contours fermes et bien osés, on pourrait faire des petits tableaux facilement."*

Later in this same entry, he described how the "Velasquez" would affect him were he to undertake a painting of his



FIG. 7. — Talma and Mlle. Duchesnois in *Hamlet*.



FIG. 8. — A.-J. DESENNE. — Scene from *Hamlet*.

own at the moment:

*"Certes, si je prenais la palette en ce moment, et j'en meurs de besoin, le beau Velasquez me travaillerait. Je voudrais étaler sur une toile brune ou rouge de la bonne grasse couleur et épaisse."*

Meanwhile he continued to work on his copy which was nearing completion on May 7.

This *Copie d'après Velasquez* (Fig. 6) was so prized by Delacroix that he kept it by him all his life and bequeathed it to his friend, Baron Rivet, whose family recently still possessed

<sup>18</sup> The character of Delacroix's understanding of Velasquez has been examined by M. FLORISOONE in *El Hispanismo de Delacroix*, in: "Revista de Arte," II (1933), pp. 386-398.

it.<sup>19</sup> A comparison of this copy with the *Self-Portrait* reveals a similarity so striking that one may well wonder that it had not heretofore been noted. The major point of difference is that the figures stand in opposite positions. The left hand of the Spaniard grasps a large hat resting upon a table. The right arm hangs by the side and the hand holds a crumpled paper. Around the neck is the order of the Golden Fleece which resembles the broad black ribbon with a pendant ornament on the breast of the other. Long hair falls over a white collar and lies on the shoulders in both figures, although the Spaniard's hair is fairer. There is no similarity of feature or facial expression between the two.

This close resemblance in costume and attitude provokes the conclusion that here we have an experiment by Delacroix in making "*des petits tableaux facilement*." His idea of "*joignant cette manière de peindre à des contours fermes et bien osés*" describes the more prominent silhouette and the more firmly modeled face of the *Self-Portrait*. The latter now appears to be a study executed under the influence of his contact with the manner of Velasquez and thus must have been painted later than 1821, probably in the late spring of 1824.

But does this imply that the *Self-Portrait* is merely an experiment in technique, that it has no content and no title? If the painting can be dated as closely as April or May 1824, it must have been done at a time when Delacroix was searching not only for new means of expression but also for new subjects to express. On the same day, April 11, when he obtained permission to copy the "Velasquez," he considered the difficulty of selecting proper subjects for his own work: "*Ce qu'il faudrait donc pour trouver un sujet, c'est d'ouvrir un livre*



FIG. 9. — A.-F. LAGRENÉE, fils. — Talma as Hamlet. — Comédie-Française, Paris.

19. A. JOUBIN, *Journal*, I, p. 72, n. 5. It is reproduced here after E. MOREAU-NÉLATION, *Delacroix Raconté par Lui-Même*, Paris, 2 vols., 1916, I, fig. 32.



*capable d'inspirer et se laisser guider par l'h(umeur).*" Thus Delacroix himself described the method by which he would begin the creation of a painting. The technical mastery of the "Velasquez" so pressed upon his attention, that he needed only a subject, needed only to open a book to find the required intellectual image which would take plastic form in the manner of Velasquez. Is there any reason to believe that such a book might have been Shakespeare's *Hamlet*?

\* \* \*

Had Delacroix conceived himself as Hamlet in the years between 1821 and 1825, more particularly in 1824, we might reasonably expect to find some reflection of his enthusiasm for such a subject in at least one of three sources: in his letters, in the *Journal* from 1822 to 1824, or in the iconography of his work at

this time. The only reference to Shakespeare in the letters of this period is found in a few words to Soulier concerning *Richard III*, written in September 1820. Shakespeare's name does not occur again in the extant letters until 1825 when, writing to Pierret from London, Delacroix mentions the Shakespearean plays he had seen or hoped to see. To his great regret he was unable to see *Hamlet*. Although the *Journal* contains no mention of Shakespeare's name until 1847, or of a subject from *Hamlet* until 1849, the interruption from 1824 to 1847 eliminates the possibility of tracing the course of his ideas while he was pre-



FIG. 10. — A.-P.-J. BERA. — Talma as Hamlet.

paring his major Shakespearean undertaking, the series of lithographs for *Hamlet* executed between 1834 and 1843. The omission of any reference to Shakespeare during the well-recorded years between 1822 and 1824 suggests that his deepest interest occurred after 1824 at the earliest. The Shakespearean iconography also tends to confirm this view. There are two minor works<sup>20</sup> recorded before the important lithograph of *Macbeth Consultant les Sorcières* of 1825, which itself precedes the first essay on a subject from *Hamlet*—the isolated lithograph of *Hamlet Contemplant le Crâne d'Yorick* of 1828. Although these three sources cannot be considered infallible, since the absence from them of any particular subject is not proof that it was never contemplated, a comparison of the paucity of Shakespearean references with the frequent mention in the letters and *Journal* of this period to other poets, and the important place assigned to non-Shakespearean literary subjects in the iconography, suggest that the likelihood of Delacroix's having performed a feat so psychologically hazardous as the portrayal of himself in the character of Hamlet is, to say the least, remote.

Indeed, this subjective explanation of the painting might almost seem to depend upon his having had some more immediate experience—presumably visual—with the drama than would have been possible had he merely read it. Such a dependence of pictorial expression upon an actual theatrical experience appears to be the case with his illustrations for *Faust*. No reference in the *Journal*, letters, or recorded work precedes the passage in a letter to Pierret of June 18, 1825, recounting his reaction to an English performance of *Faust*.<sup>21</sup> The seventeen lithographs were executed and published three years later. Long afterwards Delacroix himself acknowledged, in a letter to Philippe Burty of March 1, 1862, that this English performance had suggested to him the idea for the *Faust* prints. But an examination of his experience with the theatre in these early years tends to confirm either his indifference to Shakespeare or the absence of an opportunity to witness the plays. From 1822 to 1824 the *Journal* contains many references to the theatre, especially to the opera, but there is no mention of a play by Shakespeare. It is unlikely that he could have seen many Shakespearean performances on the French stage before September 1827, when an English company headed by Kean and Kemble enjoyed an unprecedented success with a season of English drama at the Odéon.<sup>22</sup> Before that date his only opportunity to see *Hamlet* in

20. *Le Bal chez les Capulets*, 1824 (reproduced in: E. MOREAU-NÉLATON, *Delacroix Raconté par Lui-Même*, I, Fig. 29) may have been inspired by the performance of Zingarelli's *Romeo e Giulietta* which Delacroix saw on October 27, 1822. The painting of *Desdemona et Emilia*, 1825 (ROBAUT, No. 116), was probably executed after he had seen *Othello* in London.

21. A *Scène du Sabbat* is listed by ROBAUT as of 1824 (No. 103), but it may well be later. ROBAUT places *Le Docteur Faust*, shown at the Salon of 1827, in 1826. JOUBIN also mentions the relation of this experience to the lithographs in his note to this letter, *Correspondance*, I, p. 160, n. 3.

22. A letter to Soulier of September 28, 1827 indicates that Delacroix had attended some of the first performances. Kemble appeared twice in *Hamlet* before that date. For information on this and the earlier English company discussed below, see: J.-L. BORGERHOFF, *Le Théâtre Anglais à Paris sous la Restauration*, Paris, 1913.





FIG. 11. — After DESENNE (?). — Scene from *Hamlet*.

France would have been a performance by Talma of Jean François Ducis' XVIII Century "version," or of the original drama as presented by the English players who appeared briefly in Paris in 1822.

The history of the English troupe in 1822 is obscure. Their unfortunate initial experience with *Othello*, which provoked a violent uproar at the Théâtre Porte Saint-Martin on July 31, led to their retirement to a small private theatre to which admission was obtained by subscription. Here they infrequently performed dramas by Shakespeare and other English playwrights until October 19. Delacroix was absent from Paris from August 26 until September 22, and there is no reference to the English company in his *Journal* which comes to an end for 1822 on the 27th of October, although on the first of the month the company had presented *Hamlet*.<sup>23</sup> During October he had, however, seen Rossini's *Tancrède* on the 3rd, Mozart's *Les Noces*

*de Figaro* on the 12th, and Zingarelli's *Romeo e Giulietta* on the 27th, so that his theatrical experiences had seemed important enough to call for some mention.

There remain the questions provoked by Ducis' *Hamlet*. Could Delacroix have seen it? And if he did, would the character and presentation of the play have been likely to suggest his own interpretation of the Prince? Ducis' *Hamlet*, first produced in 1769, enjoyed a continuous, if moderate, popularity on the French stage for almost a century, until it was superseded by the more accurate adaptation of Alexandre Dumas and Paul Meurice (1847). In 1803 Ducis' drama had been revived after a lapse of eighteen years for François-Joseph Talma (1762-1826), the most distinguished tragedian of the Napoleonic period. Talma continued to present *Hamlet* at the Comédie-Française, and occasionally at the Odéon, until his retirement in 1825. From 1822 until the end of June

23. "Journal des Débats," October 1, 1822. The only advertised performance.

1824 *Hamlet* was performed at the Comédie fifteen times<sup>24</sup> and at the Odéon once. During this period there is no mention either in Delacroix's letters or *Journal* of the play or its celebrated actor. There is only one entry in the *Journal* under a date corresponding with a performance of the play, but Delacroix spent that evening, March 18, 1824, with Pierret.

As for the character of the play itself, this is *Hamlet* quite literally without the Ghost.<sup>25</sup> He, poor soul, had to be banished from the stage when Shakespeare's drama was cut to fit the standards of French tragedy. Hamlet is king, not prince, of Denmark. Claudius is not the elder Hamlet's brother, but an ambitious relative and the father of Ophelia who does not run mad. Laertes is omitted and Horatio is rechristened Norceste, while Hamlet survives the deaths of Claudius and Gertrude with the sage remark: "*Je fais plus que mourir.*"

The "classic" atmosphere of the play includes not only the simplification of

the plot in obedience to the traditional unities, and frequent allusions to such antique accessories as an "*autel de l'hymen*," but the important reconstruction of the Closet Scene between Hamlet and Gertrude. Hamlet



FIG. 12. — EUGENE DELACROIX. — Talma as Nero. — Comédie-Française, Paris.

24. Statistics for performances of *Hamlet* at the Comédie-Française have been taken from A. JOANNIDES, *La Comédie-Française de 1680 à 1900, Dictionnaire Général des Pièces et des Auteurs*, Paris, 1901. For the years 1820-1824 they have been checked against the programs published daily in the "*Journal des Débats*."

25. For the history of Shakespeare's influence on French literature see sections 1, 3 and 4 of the bibliography in C. M. HAINES, *Shakespeare in France, Criticism from Voltaire to Victor Hugo*, London, 1925. For Ducis see: G. E. PENNING, *Ducis als Nachahmer Shakespeares*, Bremen, 1884. The most tolerant criticisms in English are by G. H. LEWES, *Shakespeare in France*, in "*The Cornhill Magazine*," XI (1865), pp. 33-51, and by J. DORAN, *Shakespeare in France, The Nineteenth Century*, III (1878), pp. 115-135.



now forces his mother to swear her innocence upon an urn containing the ashes of his father. Her inability to do so reveals the guilt which subsequently prompts her suicide. Just as a representation of the Players' Scene or of Hamlet in the graveyard (neither of which occurs in Ducis), captures for us the mood and substance of the drama, so did this 'Urn Scene' symbolize for the French public the character of Ducis' play.<sup>26</sup> It is the scene most frequently mentioned in criticisms of Talma's performance,<sup>27</sup> the one in which he is usually represented as Hamlet, and the only one in which he and Mlle. Duchesnois, his Gertrude, are depicted together. The presence of the urn is enough by itself to indicate



FIG. 13. — ALEXANDRE COLIN. — Talma as Nero.

both the degree of difference between this work and Shakespeare's, and the consequent difference of effect it must have exercised upon the spectator.

If the character of this play so little corresponds to the late XIX Century conception of *Hamlet*, the appearance of Talma's production seems to have been equally remote from more recent presentations and from contemporary English performances. The available evidence indicates that Talma, who in 1789 had startled one of his first audiences with the historical realism of his costume for *Brutus*, reputedly designed for him by Jacques-Louis David,<sup>28</sup> had attempted to

26. In 1822 the play in performance was described as '[une] tragédie où Talma est parvenu à faire payer au public, par quatre actes d'ennui, une scène belle, neuve et véritablement tragique,' "Journal des Débats," Nov. 24, 1822.

27. The English-speaking reader may be interested in the contemporary description of Talma as Hamlet published by SIR ARCHIBALD ALISON in his *Travels in France During the Years 1814-1815*, Edinburgh, 1816, I, pp. 186-215. Excerpts were recently reprinted, as by an anonymous author, in "Theatre Arts," XXVIII (1944), pp. 311-314.

28. See: A. JULLIEN, *Histoire du Costume au Théâtre*, Paris, 1880, pp. 301-302. The *Portrait of Talma* by Picot, erroneously published by JULLIEN, *Op. cit.*, p. 322, and by others, as Talma in *Hamlet*, has been correctly identified as Leicester in *Marie Stuart*. See: G. MONVAL, *Les Collections de la Comédie-Française*, Paris, 1897, p. 83, No. 172.



FIG. 14. — ALEXANDRE COLIN. — Talma as Hamlet.

find for *Hamlet* a compromise between the medievalism of ancient Denmark and the classic character of Ducis' dramatic structure. Rarely have the stylistic principles of Neo-Classicism and of the nascent Gothic Revival collided with more curious results.

Three contemporary representations of Talma as Hamlet and two peripheral but closely related illustrations for Ducis' text, depict the costumes and properties of this production, and are to be dated from about 1811 to 1827, a period which easily includes the years of Delacroix's early activity. In chronological order they are: a colored engraving of Talma and Mlle. Duchesnois in the Urn Scene (Fig. 7), published by Martinet in the *Petite Galerie Dramatique*

about 1811;<sup>29</sup> an engraved frontispiece by A.-J. Desenne (1785-1827) for the 1813 edition of Ducis' collected works (Fig. 8);<sup>30</sup> two portraits of Talma seated beside the urn, the first by A.-F. Lagrenée,  *fils* (1774-1832), exhibited at the Salon of 1814 (Fig. 9);<sup>31</sup> and the second by A.-P.-J. Béra (1784-1836) (Fig. 10);<sup>32</sup> and finally the frontispiece, by an anonymous engraver, for the text of *Hamlet* in the 1827 edition of Ducis' works (Fig. 11).<sup>33</sup>

The basic costume common to these five examples consists of a long-sleeved white tunic reaching below the knees and edged with black mourning-bands. Over this is worn, in four cases, a black mantle, bordered in three examples with fur. High buskins are worn in four instances; the hair is cropped short in all

29. *Petite Galerie Dramatique*, Paris, Martinet, 1796-1843, pl. 277. The plates were issued separately and were later variously bound in volumes. The example here illustrated is from the first volume of the set in the New York Public Library. By comparing the plate numbers with the first performances of new productions it is possible to arrive at the approximate date of 1811 for this particular one.

30. The example here reproduced is from the third edition, *Oeuvres de J.-F. Ducis*, Paris, Nepveu, 1819, I, opp. p. 7. See: J.-M. QUERARD, *La France Littéraire ou Dictionnaire Bibliographique*, Paris, I (1827), p. 627.

31. Reproduced from the engraving in: G. MONVAL, *Les Collections de la Comédie-Française*, Paris, 1897, No. 114, opp. p. 58. See also: E. DACIER, *Le Musée de la Comédie-Française*, Paris, 1905, p. 193.

32. From the lithograph (?) found in a scrapbook which belonged to Bogumil Dawison, the Polish Shakespearean actor. Reproduced from the photograph in: H. STUECKE, *Die Deutsche Theaterausstellung, Berlin, 1910*, Berlin, (*Schriften der Gesellschaft für Theatergeschichte*, XVII) (1911), pl. 19. This is perhaps the portrait described as by Bérard (*sic*) in: P.-L. JACOB, ED., *Bibliothèque Dramatique de M. de Soleinne*, Paris, 1844, V, Part 2, p. 215, No. 105.

33. *Oeuvres de J.-F. Ducis*, Paris, Ladvocat, 1827, I, illustrating Act III, Sc. 2. The figure to the right of Hamlet is Norceste. According to QUERARD, *loc. cit.*, the engravings are after Desenne.



five. In only one, the Béra portrait, does the tunic have a wide collar; elsewhere the neckline is low and severe.<sup>34</sup>

The retention of this costume by Talma throughout the period of his performance of the *rôle* may be inferred from two circumstances. In the last of the series enumerated above, the frontispiece of 1827, the costume worn by Hamlet tallies in all important respects with the Martinet plate, the earliest of the series. This can only mean that in the year after Talma's death the impression made by his stage appearance was still familiar to the Parisian reader and spectator. Also, the publication, more than ten years after Martinet's plate, of a lithograph representing Mlle. Duchesnois as Gertrude in a costume substantially the same as the earlier one,<sup>35</sup> suggests that no radical innovations were introduced into a production which, through 1824, had been presented on an average of only thrice a year since 1803.

To conclude, between Delacroix's *Self-Portrait* and the available documentation of Talma's *Hamlet* there appears not the slightest connection. If Delacroix saw Talma as Hamlet—and there is no evidence that he did not—the performance had no perceptible influence on his work or on his writings such as we can detect after his later experience of seeing *Faust* in London in 1825, or even the performance in English of *Hamlet* in Paris in 1827. Perhaps the validity of this conjecture was proved many years later by Delacroix himself. In 1853, when he began his *Portrait of Talma* which now hangs in the Comédie-Française (Fig. 12), he chose to portray him as Nero in *Britannicus*, after the lithograph by Alexandre Colin (1798-1875) (Fig. 13).<sup>36</sup> Now Colin had previously, perhaps as early as 1820,<sup>37</sup> published a bust portrait of Talma as Hamlet (Fig. 14), showing the familiar tunic and fur-edged mantle, and in 1824, the

34. Two other portraits are related to the Hamlet theme. That by James Lonsdale (1777-1839), exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1818 and published in: *La Belle Assemblée*, London, October 1824, No. 193, frontis., represents Talma's head on a bust draped as Hamlet in the contemporary English taste. This composite likeness was probably inspired by the visit of Talma and Mlle. Georges in June 1817. They presented two programs of excerpts from the French drama but *Hamlet* was not included. See: E. EGGLI, *Talma à Londres en 1817, A Miscellany of Studies in Romance Languages . . . presented to Leon E. Kastner*, Cambridge, 1932, pp. 188-206. A portrait reproduced by J. SCHICK and W. DEETJEN in W. WIDMANN'S *Hamlets Bühnenlaufbahn 1601-1877*, Leipzig, 1931, pl. 31, as Talma in *Hamlet* by Laurens (*sic*) has as much relation to Empire morning-dress as it has to Hamlet's mourning-garb. The waist-length portrait by H.-F. Riesener (1767-1828) in the Musée Carnavalet was engraved by J.-B. Mauzaisse (1784-1844) and is recorded as "Talma in *Hamlet*" in: L. A. HALL, *Catalogue of Dramatic Portraits . . . in the Harvard College Library*, Cambridge, Mass., 1934, IV, p. 127, No. 19. The dress has no relation to the Hamlet costume isolated in the present text, and if this portrait is the same as that listed as No. 439 in the catalogue of the *Exposition Théâtrale* of the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs (Paris, 1908) it is apparent that it has never been identified with *Hamlet*. J. ROBIQUET in the *Guide du Musée Carnavalet*, Paris, 1935, p. 69, does not identify the rôle.

35. In *Recueil des Costumes de tous les Ouvrages Dramatiques Représentés avec Succès sur les Grands Théâtres de Paris*, Paris, n.d., livraison 16, pl. 14. This may be dated about 1822 by the method followed for Martinet's plates.

36. In *Collection de Portraits des Artistes des Théâtres de Paris, Dessinés et Lithographiés d'après Nature par Colin*, Paris, n.d., No. 36.

37. Published by PAUL LEGRAND. See: H. BERALDI, *Les Graveurs du XIXe Siècle*, IX (1889), p. 87. Reproduced through the courtesy of the Theatre Collection, Harvard College Library.

very year with which we are concerned, he had drawn a profile portrait of Delacroix himself.<sup>38</sup> Even if the latter had not known all his friend's work, it is significant that in later life he recalls Talma through Colin's portrayal of the actor in his most classic *rôle*. Apparently we must look elsewhere for the interpretation of the *Self-Portrait*.

\* \* \*

In a previous issue of the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts" the present writer examined Eugène Delacroix's life-long concern with the poetry of Lord Byron, emphasizing not so much the many familiar paintings of Byronic subjects as the character of the artist's literary and pictorial interests in the English poet as they appear in his letters and *Journal*.<sup>39</sup> Once the material and psychological circumstances which inclined Delacroix toward Byron had been related, the inquiry turned on the origin and nature of his knowledge of Byron. The evidence indicated that the year 1824 marked, if not the beginning of his interest, at least a period of intensive study which culminated, three years later, with the exhibition at the Salon of 1827 of three important paintings of subjects from Byron's poetry: *La Mort de Sardanapale*, *Marino Faliero*, and the *Combat du Giaour et du Pacha*.<sup>40</sup> At this point attention was directed to two important and interdependent questions. In which language, French or English, was Delacroix accustomed to read Byron? And, given the language, what edition of the poetry did he use? From the letters and *Journal*, wherein all titles and quotations are cited in French, it would appear that he read Byron in translation. Further analysis of the lengthiest and most thoughtful entry dealing with Byron in the early *Journal*, the passage written on May 15, 1824, revealed similarities between Delacroix's remarks and certain lines in the *Essai sur le Génie et le Caractère de Lord Byron*, published by Amédée Pichot the year before, in the first volume of the fourth edition of his *Oeuvres de Lord Byron*, the first elaborately illustrated edition published on the Continent.<sup>41</sup> The suggestion has been made that this

38. Now in the Musée Carnavalet; reproduced in ESCHOLIER, *Delacroix*, I, p. 145.

39. Eugène Delacroix and Lord Byron, in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," XXIII (1943), pp. 99-110.

40. During this period he also executed a lithograph on the subject of *The Giaour*, several small paintings based on the Greco-Turkish War, and his two major statements on that theme, the *Scènes des Massacres de Scio* (1824) and *La Grèce Expirant sur les Ruines de Missolonghi* (1827), subjects not unrelated to Byron's poetry and tragic death.

41. *Oeuvres de Lord Byron. Quatrième édition, entièrement revue et corrigée par A[médée]. P[ichot]*, Paris, Ladvocat, 8 vols., 1822-25. The first volume was not issued until 1823. For this translation see also: L. A. BISSON, *Amédée Pichot*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1942, pp. 197-216. A later indication that Delacroix was familiar with PICHOT's prose translation is found in a letter to Pierret of June 14, 1826. Delacroix quotes as follows from *The Giaour*: "Je le reconnais à la paleur de son front; c'est lui qui m'a ravi l'amour de Leïla: c'est le Giaour maudit!" Part of this is taken directly from Pichot, the remainder is a paraphrase of the French. PICHOT had written: "C'est lui! c'est lui même, s'écrie Hassan. Je le reconnais à la paleur de son front. . . C'est lui! malheur à toi, amant de la perfide Leïla! maudit Giaour!" (III, p. 22). BYRON's original lines are: "'T is he! 't is he! I know him now; I know him by his pallid brow. . . 'T is he! well met in any hour, Lost Leila's love accursèd Giaour!" (lines 610 ff). No other version of this passage was published in French until J.-M.-H. BIGEON's translation appeared in 1828.



particular edition might afford some evidence as to the character of Delacroix's early interpretations of Byronic subjects.

With this edition before us we may retrace for a moment the course of Delacroix's activity during the spring of 1824. In March he had seen a painting which he believed to be by Velasquez and which he wished to copy. On April 11 he obtained permission and began work on the copy which was still unfinished on May 7. On April 11 it had also occurred to him that the technique of the "Velasquez" could be used for the execution of small paintings:

*"Il me semble qu'en joignant cette manière de peindre à des contours fermes et bien osés, on pourrait faire des petits tableaux facilement."* Later in the same entry he acknowledged the difficulty of selecting a proper subject: *"Je suis, depuis une heure, à balancer entre Mazeppa, Don Juan, le Tasse, et cent autres."* But a solution was soon found. For form there is "Velasquez:" *"Certes, si je prenais la palette en ce moment, et j'en meurs de besoin, le beau Vélasquez me travaillerait."* For content, there is a host of poetic images: *"Ce qu'il faudrait donc pour trouver un sujet, c'est d'ouvrir un livre capable d'inspirer et se laisser guider par l'h[umeur] . . . Il y en a qui ne doivent jamais manquer leur effet. Ce sont ceux-là qu'il faut avoir. De même que des gravures. Dante, Lamartine, Byron, Michel-Ange."*



FIG. 15. — THALES FIELDING. — Eugène Delacroix in 1824.

The program is clear and inevitable. Under the compulsion of a new technical procedure he would create a subject inspired by one of his favorite poets, perhaps even assisted by an illustrative engraving.<sup>42</sup> And of the four poets mentioned, Byron was most in his thoughts. He had already that evening been torn with indecision as to whether to paint a Mazeppa, a Don Juan, or a Tasso—all Byronic subjects. These were the days when he planned to paint the Giaour and the Pasha, when the dead

42. Delacroix made no secret of the fact that such objects were of use to him and occasionally even offered the complete subject for a painting. See: A. LINZELER, *Une Source d'Inspiration Inconnue d'Eugène Delacroix*, in: "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," IX (1933), pp. 309-312.

hand of Selim rose from the waters in *The Bride of Abydos*,<sup>43</sup> when, finally, he was studying *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

The sequence of dates is worth observing. On April 11, 13, 19, 20 and 21 and May 7 he was at work on his copy of the "Velasquez." On March 4, April 11 and 26, and May 10 and 11 he was thinking of Byron. On May 16 he studied *Childe Harold*. Two days later a meditative entry on Byron and Dante was undoubtedly inspired by news of the poet's death at Missolonghi (April 19), which was published in Paris that morning. Meanwhile, on the 15th he had set down his reflections after reading a criticism of Byron which appears to have been that which had recently been published by Pichot in the illustrated edition of his French translation. The second volume of this edition is devoted to *Le Pèlerinage de Childe-Harold*, the poem which Delacroix was reading the following day.

In this particular volume there are four illustrations engraved by Adrien Godefroy after drawings by Richard Westall.<sup>44</sup> One of these represents Childe Harold's vision of the Roman daughter who nourished her starving father (Fig. 16).<sup>45</sup> The vision occurs within an arched recess in the left background. Toward the right foreground stands Childe Harold dressed in black, the upper part of his body wrapped in a cloak. Around his neck is a white collar. His left arm is

concealed in the folds of the cloak, but his right hand rests on the top of a sarcophagus beside which he stands. His left leg is slightly advanced.

In all important respects this figure of Childe Harold resembles the young man in the *Self-Portrait* (Fig. 1). To

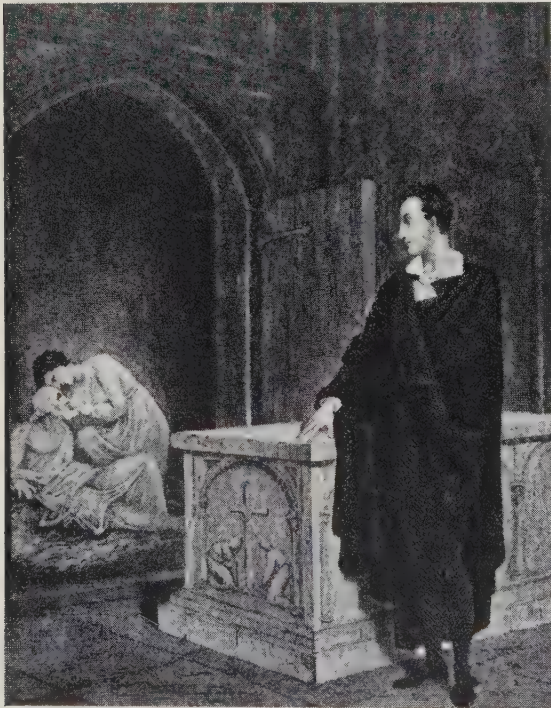


FIG. 16. — RICHARD WESTALL. — Scene from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

43. *Journal*, 11 May 1824. "La fin de la Fiancée d'Abydos, la Mort de Sélim, son corps roulé par les vagues et cette main surtout, cette main soulevée par le flot qui vient mourir sur le rivage. Cela est bien sublime et n'est qu'à lui (Byron). Je sens ces choses-là comme la peinture les comporte."

44. A.-P.-F. GODEFROY, 1777-1865, a minor illustrative engraver. R. WESTALL (1765-1836) is best known for his numerous book illustrations. The plates from his drawings for *Victories of the Duke of Wellington*, London, 1819, were engraved in colored aqua-tint by Thales Fielding, an intimate friend of Delacroix from at least 1823. It is not impossible that through Fielding Delacroix became acquainted with the work of Westall. The latter's illustrations to Byron were originally published in London by JOHN MURRAY in December 1819. It is probable that Godefroy engraved his plates from the English engravings after Westall's originals.

45. *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV, Stanzas 148-151.



be sure, the costume of the Childe is less elaborate and his hair is cut short. His cloak is tossed more negligently around his body so that it conceals any ornament or weapon which he might be wearing, but his white collar is merely an unbuttoned version of that worn by the other figure. In two important details the figures are identical; both are turned toward the left, rather than toward the right as is the copy after "Velasquez," and the right hand rests upon a prominent object, in one case a sarcophagus, in the other an undefined cubical mass.

The conclusion seems inescapable. Is not Delacroix's *Self-Portrait* (Fig. 18) a presentation of himself as the hero of a poem which he is known to have read intently, executed as a small painting according to a method which he has himself defined in his *Journal*? He has used the technique and the costume of the "Velasquez," which made such an impression upon him during April and May, 1824, to produce an image of the Childe Harold he had encountered in his enthusiastic discovery of Byron, and has thus created one of those "small paintings" which he had described.<sup>46</sup> By the substitution of his own intense and handsome features for the vapid leer of Westall's flaccid figure he has transformed an "experiment" into a vital and valid pictorial experience.

In order to demonstrate the effect on Delacroix's work of the powerful attraction of Byron's verse, we have had to reject a tradition and to upset some tenacious, but unestablished, assumptions. In the first place, the date of the painting must be advanced three years—from 1821 to 1824. There can be no substantial objection to this on technical grounds; rather the position of the *Self-Portrait* is strengthened, for it now falls within that period of eager technical experimentation which Delacroix experienced in painting the *Scènes des Massacres de Scio*. The advance in the date also involves adding three years to the age of Delacroix as he is depicted. But might not this young man be twenty-six quite as well as twenty-three? To judge by the portraits by Thales Field-



FIG. 17. — RICHARD WESTALL. — Scene from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

46. Even the anachronism of XVII Century dress is not inappropriate for Childe Harold. Though Byron portrayed a contemporary experience, his archaic expressions, in the first two cantos, and his continuous use of poetic place-names make, and made, Childe Harold seem remote in time. Westall, who was the first to illustrate the poem, dressed the Childe in a costume far from up-to-date for 1812. See especially his plate for *Canto II, Stanza 69*, "Vain fear! the Suliotes stretch'd the welcome hand" (re-engraved for Pichot's fourth edition, II, opp. p. 90). Breeches have become tights, a coat resembles a tunic, and a broad-brimmed black hat is trimmed with a white ostrich plume. (Fig. 17)

ing of 1824 (Fig. 15)<sup>47</sup> and by Steuben of a few years later (Fig. 19), Delacroix preserved his youthful appearance throughout his twenties.

"*Ce déguisement n'est-il pas une révélation?*" Yes, Jamot was right — if not Shakespeare, Byron; if not Hamlet, then his stepson, Childe Harold. But the revelation remains. Young Delacroix, fretting in hostile Paris, projects himself in the person of the widest wanderer the early XIX Century knew. The poems which intoxicated a continent would supply him with inspiration for a lifetime. On May 11 he exclaimed: "*Rappelle-toi, pour t'enflammer éternellement, certains passages de Byron; ils me vont bien!*" At times he even wished he might himself have been a poet. Twice in these months of April and May, 1824, he remarked: "*Que je voudrais être poète!*" And once he added: "*Mais au moins, produis avec la peinture!*" Pictorial poetry he did produce. 1822 saw the infernal vision



FIG. 18. — EUGÈNE DELACROIX. — Self-Portrait, 1819.

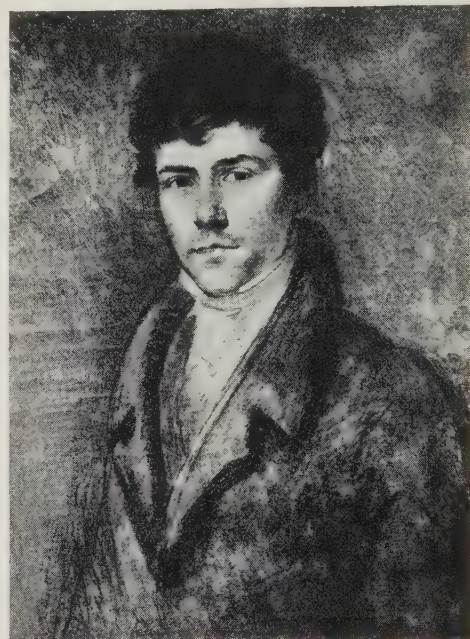


FIG. 19. — CARL VON STEUBEN. — Portrait of Eugène Delacroix (After MOREAU-NÉLATION).

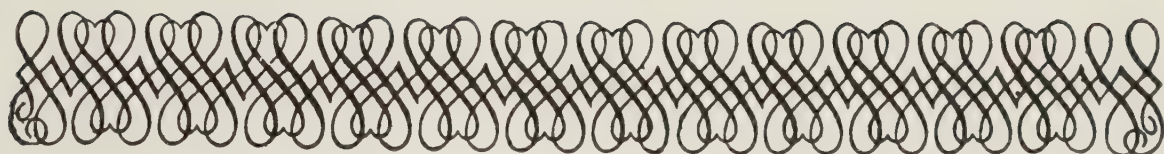
of *Dante et Virgile*; 1824 was yet to witness in the *Scènes des Massacres de Scio* a nobler epic on the fate of the Greeks than any Byron ever wrote. The poetic origin of these splendid things is made all the clearer for us when we accept and comprehend the *Portrait d'Eugène Delacroix en Costume de Childe-Harold* which, through the generous bequest of Paul Jamot, now takes its place beside them in the Louvre.

GEORGE HEARD HAMILTON.

January 8, 1945.

47. After the lithograph reproduced in: ESCHOLIER, *Delacroix*, I, p. 143.





# DRAWINGS BY INGRES

## IN THE

# WINTHROP COLLECTION

**I**NGRES bequeathed to Montauban the several thousand sketches and studies, notes and note-books that were in his studio at the time of his death. Thus he made his native city a preeminent place of pilgrimage for all those who would know and understand him thoroughly. That single gesture, at once proud and generous, reveals the loyalty of his affections. Only a visit to the museum which bears his name can reveal the full measure of the study, the steady searching, and the practice which he gave, throughout a long life, to every aspect of his art. Yet even for the most passionate "Ingriste" such a visit of homage and enlightenment is not easy. For many it is impossible.

Grenville Lindall Winthrop, who was second to none in the Western Hemisphere in his admiration and understanding of the work of Ingres, recognized the difficulty of that journey for American students and amateurs. Beginning years ago when the work and the influence of the great French classicist of the past century was not widely known in the United States, Mr. Winthrop assembled a group

of Ingres paintings<sup>1</sup> and drawings that is as varied and representative as it is carefully selected. Mr. Winthrop ever kept in mind the particular character of the ultimate destination of his collection — The Fogg Museum of Art at Harvard University. "M. Ingres" himself would surely have looked with favor upon a drawing collection assembled and made available for the instruction and delight of students and scholars in a teaching museum.

The thirty-five drawings by Ingres which came to the Museum with the Winthrop Collection after Mr. Winthrop's death in 1943, include portraits from the artist's early to his late years, studies or details for large compositions, finished working drawings squared for transfer, replicas and variants of some of his well-known paintings, and a copy after the antique.

The subject-matter encompasses the spread of his interest and allegiance. The portraits are of the friends and relatives in whose circle he lived and moved, and of the patrons of historic names upon whose world he touched. His debt to the masters of Greece and Rome is acknowledged as clearly as his undying devotion to his patron saint, Raphael.

The full range of the means he used is represented. There is the thin sharp pencil of his youth used on clear white paper, and the softer pencil of his full maturity used with heightening in white on brownish paper. There are sketches on tracing paper, and studies on heavy drawing paper in a rather greasy crayon similar to that of certain XVI Century Italian drawings. There is a small pen-drawing complete in itself. There is watercolor used with his particular finesse, in a very personal color range.

The earliest drawing of the group, that of the *Forestier Family* (Fig. 1), is as accomplished as it is important, not only stylistically but also for the artist's own personal history. It comes from the Collection of Degas, who had thirty-two drawings by the master he so deeply admired. According to Lapauze, Degas acquired it from M. Guille, the nephew of Ingres, whose daughter was the painter's god-child. Lapauze describes the drawing<sup>2</sup> as a tracing of the Louvre *Forestier Family* — a drawing of which he himself possessed a replica. He may have been misled into thinking that Degas possessed a tracing because of the brownish tone to which the paper, a heavy, smooth drawing paper, had faded. It is however, clearly not a tracing of the Louvre drawing. The two differ both in scale and in details. The Louvre version measures 235 x 322 mm. according to the Louvre catalogue of drawings<sup>3</sup> (or

1. The paintings and oil sketches are: *L'Age d'Or*; *L'Odalisque à l'Esclave*; *Portrait of a Man in Black Hat*; *Portrait of M. de Nogent*; *Portrait of Mme. Frédéric Reiset*; *Raphael et la Fornarina*; *Self Portrait*; *Study for Andromeda*; *Two Studies for Le Martyre de Saint Symphorien*.

2. H. LAPAUZE, *Ingres, sa Vie et son Oeuvre*, Paris, 1911, p. 60.

3. J. GUIFFREY, *Inventaire Général Illustré des Dessins du Musée du Louvre et du Musée de Versailles*, Paris, 1911, Vol. VI, p. 124.





FIG. 1. — INGRES. — The Forestier Family, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

210 x 320 mm. according to Galichon's listing).<sup>4</sup> The Winthrop drawing is 300 x 375 mm. In the Louvre drawing the spaniel lies with his left ear concealed behind Julie's skirt. In the Winthrop drawing both his ears show. In the former the judge, Julie's father, sits with his right leg about a foot from the leg of the harpsichord. In the Winthrop drawing he is closer to the center. In the Louvre drawing only Julie's left hand shows as she touches the key boards. In the Winthrop drawing her forearm is shown nearly to the elbow. Perhaps the most important of all is the difference in the inscription. The Louvre drawing is inscribed at the left corner: "*Ingres fecit, 1806.*" The Winthrop version is inscribed in the same place and just as clearly: "*Ingres f. 1804.*" Across the center foreground Ingres then added: "*famille de M. Forestier ancien juge de S. Nicholas à Paris.*"

It was in 1804 that Ingres' father came to Paris to visit his son and was introduced to the Forestier family with whom his son was already on cordial terms. Ingres and the young Julie had much to bring them together. She was not only musically

4. "Gazette des Beaux-Arts," Vol. IX, 1861, p. 358.

gifted. She studied painting in David's studio as well. M. Forestier looked with favor upon the young man whose suit had been accepted. There was reason enough for Ingres to draw his charming fiancée with her family about her. At the right is her father smiling slightly; at the left is her mother revealing contentment and satisfaction as much by her folded hands as by her facial expression; her uncle, M. Sallé, solid and tolerant; and at the far left, by the door, the devoted and interested servant, Clotilde. The pet spaniel lies alert but at ease, a fold of his mistress' skirt across his silky back. It seems safe to assume that the numbers of the Forestier family were pleased with the drawing which represented them with such happy fidelity and that when, in 1806, Ingres went off to the French Academy at Rome after five years of waiting for his pension to be paid, he made them a replica, taking with him his own first version of 1804. In that first drawing the only weakness had been the drawing, in shadow, of Julie's forearm. He eliminated that weakness in the replica by moving her nearer the harpsichord.

An almost indefinable difference exists between the two, in the facial expression of each figure and in the feeling for form. The contours and the poses remain the same, but in the Louvre version something a trifle harder, a little more fixed, a shade more superficial, has altered their expressions and stiffened their poses. It was impossible for the artist to quite recapture the mood and the emotion that marked every touch of his pencil in 1804. In the drawing of 1804, there is more than a memory of XVIII Century ease and grace of manner, and a suggestion of air and depth. It is not only that there is more space above their heads. There is an almost palpable atmosphere, which vanished two years later.

But if in ambiance the drawing recalls the century just past,



FIG. 2. — INGRES. — Portrait of an Unknown Lady, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.



it is new and original in technique and style. The XVIII Century had had its pencil portraits, but they had been of medallion scale, busts and heads, in profile or full face. And they had been drawn using a familiar vocabulary of short lines, often of equal length and value, a vocabulary which the engraver could easily translate into his own medium. The use, on an untinted white paper, of a single hard pencil which expressed form by contour and by tonal values kept within an extremely narrow but subtle scale, was Ingres' own innovation. As so often happens, the innovator at once achieved a mastery in the new technique that no one has since rivalled. His power of rendering form by simple contour is unique in the XIX Century. Without strong accents there is yet ample emphasis, and there is a unity of surface that through its very absence of



FIG. 3. — INGRES. — Mme. Hayard with her Small Daughter, Caroline, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

rhetoric achieves distinction through its delicate, balanced harmony.

In Rome the new pensioner of the French Academy took up his studies with enthusiasm and steadfast purpose. The disheartening reports from Paris about the reception of his paintings at the Salon injured his pride but did not shake his self-confidence, as his first letter from Rome to M. Forestier proves. Perhaps the very fact that it was to M. Forestier and not to Julie that the letters were addressed is significant. In any event, it was from Rome that he broke his engagement to her. Paris seemed remote. Rome and all it offered had a stronger pull.

His mind was filled with plans for ambitious paintings. Several were soon begun, but they promised little income. When his years as a pensioner at the Academy ended, it became imperative that he make enough to live. During his student years, when he devoted the major part of his time to the brush, his hand lost none of its incomparable skill in handling a pencil. He drew those about him with the

same clarity, truth and precision as he had drawn the Forestier family. *The Portrait of an Unknown Lady* (Fig. 2) dates from his early years in Rome. It is of shining perfection. A woman of more than comfortable proportions is seated in a chair whose curves faintly echo her own. Her feet rest upon a footstool. An embroidered scarf has slipped from her sloping shoulders and is looped over her forearms. Frills, ruffles, feathers and jewelry are drawn with meticulous and delicate exactitude, and yet all this eloquent detail is held in proper subjugation by the vivid characterization of her face with its widely-set humorous eyes, up-turned nose, and slightly puckered mouth. The sharpness of clear pencil lines on the smooth bright paper make it seem almost as though the drawing were done in silver on polished ivory. The lady is the same one represented in a drawing in the Metropolitan Museum where she stands with her little son at her side, again wearing a feathered bonnet fastened under her ample chin, with a view of Rome, including the Villa Medici, behind her. The Metropolitan drawing is dated 1808. The Winthrop drawing, although undated, must have been made about the same time.

The question of first version or replica, which becomes a familiar one in any consideration of Ingres' works, is again raised by the *Profile Portrait of Guillon-Lethière*, the director of the French Academy at Rome from 1807 to 1816. Another drawing of Lethière, so similar that only the closest examination reveals the minor differences between it and the Winthrop drawing, is in the Bonnat Collection, Bayonne. It seems impossible that anyone but Ingres himself could have drawn the two. The Winthrop drawing is almost literally a speaking likeness. The strong and noble head is placed on the page as a head is placed upon a Roman coin. Its modeling is as subtle and as definitive, but there the influence of the antique world ends. The touch that makes one almost feel movement through the cloud of his hair and hear the vibration of his amiable voice from his half-open mouth, is modern. The drawing is signed and dated at the right: "*Ingres, rome 1811.*" The Bonnat drawing has Ingres' signature but seems to have no date. One concludes therefore that the Winthrop drawing must be the one described by Delaborde<sup>5</sup> and by Galichon.<sup>6</sup> Both critics record an engraving after the drawing by an anonymous artist.

Lapauze states that it was not in 1813 but in 1814 that Ingres went to Naples to undertake the portrait of the Murat family and to paint several large pictures for Queen Caroline. The portrait group had not been done when disaster overtook the Murats, a disaster which also affected Ingres' fortune. There exist, however, two portrait drawings, one of Lucien Murat and the other of his son Achille, both dated Naples, 1814. These may have been connected with the commission. In the Winthrop Collection there is an enchanting drawing of a rather awkward young girl seated in an elegantly simple chair, a drawing signed and dated: "*J. Ingres, Naples,*

5. H. DELABORDE, *Ingres sa Vie, ses Travaux*, Paris, 1870, pp. 304-305, No. 355.

6. *Op. cit.*, p. 360.





FIG. 4. — INGRES. — The Family of Lucien Bonaparte, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

1813." It is tempting to believe that the sitter was perhaps another Murat, Letitia-Josephine, who was born in 1802. Whoever the young girl may have been, when he drew her portrait with its precise, firm and delicate contours and the crisp edges of the ruchings and the knife-pleated capelet, Ingres surely had in mind the Greek vase paintings for which he had such deep and lasting admiration (Fig. 23).

Two years later, in 1815, he drew the half-length figure of *Mme. Hayard with her Small Daughter Caroline* (Fig. 3), one of a pair of drawings. The other, not in the Winthrop Collection, showed *M. Hayard with his Older Daughter Marguerite*. Again Ingres used a sharp, hard pencil with the most subtle, dexterous stumping to give the delicate modeling of the faces.

His most ambitious drawing is dated from Rome of that same year: the *Family of Lucien Bonaparte* (Fig. 4). The group contains nine figures, assembled with disarming grace about the central figure of Lucien's wife, the Princess Canino. The minutest details of their elegant Empire gowns are faithfully and delightfully recorded, yet each head is stamped with its separate and individual character which dominates even the family likeness discernible in the younger children. Surely,

Ingres once again had in mind the quality of line and the mastery of composition of certain Greek vases, but rather, one suspects, composition as he had known it through d'Hancarville's rectangular reproductions than from the curved surfaces of the vases themselves.<sup>7</sup>

The moment chosen is a historic one. Lucien is not present. It is during the Hundred Days and he is absent with Napoleon. His presence and that of Madame Mère are suggested by the busts in the background, after Marin and Canova.

Alexandrine de Bleschamp, the central figure which holds the group together, had been the first wife of the banker Joubert. Delécluze, in his *Souvenirs de Soixante Années*, describes her as he first knew her during the Directorate: "*Ce fut dans la famille de son ami [Lullin] qu'il vit une de ces réunions brillantes où se trouvaient rassemblées mesdames Récamier, Talien, Carvalho, Chabot de la Tour, ainsi que madame Joubertout [sic], qui devait bientôt devenir la femme de Lucien Bonaparte, puis enfin princesse de Canino . . . Madame Joubertout, par son esprit, par la grâce enchanteresse de sa personne et par son assiduité à ces réunions en était véritablement l'âme, et il est difficile de rencontrer une personne qui a une beauté aussi gracieuse que la sienne réunît les agréments d'une conversation plus animée et plus spirituelle.*"

"*A cette époque singulière, l'aristocratie pour les hommes était le talent, pour les femmes, la beauté, et en effet les salons de Paris n'ont jamais compris un si grand nombre de belles personnes qu'en ce temps, où la beauté équivalait à une dot.*"<sup>8</sup>

Ingres seems to have shared the opinion of his former fellow student. Obviously, Alexandrine de Bleschamp, a cousin of Lamartine, could charm her family circle as earlier she had charmed Paris salons. She had not gone from Rome to Paris with Lucien because she was awaiting the birth, in the early autumn, of another child. Instead she gathered around her Anna Joubert (later the Princess Hercolani), her daughter by her first marriage; Charlotte (later the Princess Gabrielli) and Christine (later Countess Arved Posse and then Lady Dudley Stuart), the two daughters of Lucien by Christine Boyer, his first wife; and the five living children of her marriage to Lucien, Charles Lucien, Jeanne (later the Marquise Honorati), Letitia who became Lady Wyse, Paul Marie, who like Byron, died in Greece, and Louis Lucien, who became, like his brother Charles, a well-known linguist and scholar.<sup>9</sup> Pierre Napoleon was born in September.

How did Ingres succeed in making them all pose? I suspect that they did not all sit at once while he worked out the entire composition. There is evidence that some of his family groups he put together on a final page after he had made separate

7. P. F. H. D'HANCARVILLE, *Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities from the Cabinet of Hon. Wm. Hamilton*, Naples, 1766-1767.

8. E.-J. DELÉCLUZE, *Souvenirs de Soixante Années*, Paris, 1862, pp. 51-52.

9. H. LAPAUZE, *Op. cit.*, pp. 180-181.





FIG. 5. — INGRES. — Mrs. Vesey and her Daughter, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

drawings of the different figures. He proceeded in that manner with the *Family of Guillon-Lethière* in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and with the *Gatteaux Family*. At Bayonne there is a separate drawing of *Mme. Lucien Bonaparte*. The pose is not that of this drawing, but seems to have been taken from some Pompeian fresco. The year, however, is the same, 1815. Perhaps that drawing represents a first idea.

Ingres is still using only a sharp hard pencil — and with what incredible mastery and magic! It creates both form and texture. Soft flesh, silky hair, fine cambric and India mull, polished wood — all are described. Never once does the artist raise his voice, to break the gentle harmony. The fate of the family he was depicting was hanging in the balance, yet the artist seems to

have caught them in a golden moment of domestic content.<sup>10</sup>

With the fall of the Bonapartes came Ingres' own most difficult years. Patrons and purchasers for his paintings vanished. Yet he kept at his painting, gaining a less than modest income by drawing the portraits of visitors to Rome, particularly the English visitors of 1816 and 1817. Released from England by the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the British aristocracy had once more flocked to the continent, especially to the Eternal City. Ingres' own archaeological interests seem to have put him in touch with his first English client, Mr. North, later Earl of Guildford.<sup>11</sup> Others followed, perhaps upon North's recommendation. One wonders if Lord Wil-

10. The drawing was inherited by Charles Lucien, then by his fourth child, his daughter Charlotte, who married Count Primoli, and then by their son, Count Joseph Napoleon Primoli. Although it had been at one time destined for the Louvre, it passed out of the family's hands.

11. BRINSLEY FORD, *Ingres Portrait Drawings of English People at Rome, 1806-1820*, in: "The Burlington Magazine," July 1939, p. 4.



FIG. 6. — INGRES. — M. Augustin Jordan and his Daughter, Adrienne, drawing.  
— Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

liam Cavendish-Bentinck and his charming lady, whom Ingres drew three times, might not also have been influential in obtaining commissions for him. A son of the Duke of Portland and the future Governor-General of India, Lord Bentinck, had had a colorful career in Italy as soldier and diplomat. In 1811 he had command of the English troops in Sicily. When the Queen of Naples was deposed he was made Captain-General of all the troops. His favorite idea was the emancipation of all Italy. "He was the first English statesman to conceive the idea of a modern kingdom of Italy, and to take some steps toward creating one."<sup>12</sup> The steps he took, freeing Genoa and Milan and restoring their Constitutions, were too fast and radical for those at home in England, and he was relieved of his command. Forbidden to land

at Naples, he went to Rome (where Ingres drew his portrait and that of his wife) and then to Florence, where he lived for several years.

Ingres adopted a somewhat freer, easier technique from about the middle of the second decade of the century on, when drawing his friends and colleagues. The scale of the figure was larger, the pencil softer, the contour more broken, and the treatment of dress more summary. But even in these drawings which often were gifts and which must have been done in a fraction of the time that was given to the more finished and elaborate portraits, the characterization of the model remains dominant and unforgettable. There is such a drawing in the Winthrop group, a half-length portrait of a round-faced curly-headed young man,<sup>13</sup> who stands with his stiff hat tucked under his left arm and his right hand swinging the string of his

12. D. C. BOULGER, *Lord William Bentinck*, London, 1892, p. 51.

13. Perhaps DELABORDE, *Op. cit.*, no. 234.



glasses. His face is modeled with great care and the cravat and his forehead have been heightened with white, but the rest is dashed off in a few short energetic lines that give the bulk and mass of the figure admirably.

Obviously the artist felt that the fee — modest as it was — of those who were willing to sit for him, entitled the patron to a carefully posed picture and an exact record of costume as well as of feature. *Mrs. Vesey and her Daughter* (Fig. 5), later Lady Colthurst, were drawn in 1816. Ingres used a softer pencil than for Lucien Bonaparte's family, but the details are as complete. Mrs. Vesey sits with her little feet, of which she was obviously proud, on a cushioned ottoman on which her daughter also sits facing her. The mother wears a lace shawl over her head, and the bosom of her taffeta dress is bedecked with ribbons and brooches. The daughter, who wears a high plumed hat, holds her mother's right hand in her own left, and rests her right hand on her mother's lap. Both regard the spectator with a steady gaze. As in the majority of his portrait drawings, the pose is static, but there is such alert intelligence in the expression of the eyes and such life in the figures themselves that the effect is one of movement momentarily controlled.

One of Ingres' pupils, Balze, records that, for such portraits Ingres had his patrons sit an hour and a half in the morning and two and a half hours in the afternoon. He rarely retouched them the following day. The artist himself acknowledged that he watched his models at lunchtime between the sittings, and while they were not posing, but making their accustomed gestures, he gained valuable impressions of their personalities.<sup>14</sup>



FIG. 7. — INGRES. — Mme. Augustin Jordan and her Son, Gabriel, drawing.  
— Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

14. R. BALZE, in: "La Renaissance," May 1921, p. 216.

Because Ingres relished all the detail of costume and adornment, and modeled the faces of his sitters with superb mastery, his drawings may seem at first glance to be astonishingly realistic. Their realism is deceptive. Actually each is a subtle but definite abstraction. Only that which is absolutely essential to the artist's scheme remains, and yet in the few essential lines he succeeds in giving, as the finest French draughtsmen have before and after him, the rank, class, standing and character of his sitters. More than that, he even makes their nationality evident. No one, even without labels, would mistake the *Daughters of the Earl of Sandwich*, *Lord and*

*Lady Cavendish - Bentinck* or *Mrs. Vesey and her Daughter* (Fig. 5), for anything but British. Similarly no one could fail to know that *Madame Augustin Jordan and her Son Gabriel* (Fig. 7) and *Monsieur Augustin Jordan and his Daughter Adrienne* (Fig. 6) are French, even Parisian.

Augustin Jordan, an emigré aristocrat, the brother of the orator Camille Jordan, was made French ambassador to Rome upon the return of the monarchy. And it was in Rome — in 1817 — that he and his family posed for his countryman, for two full-length standing portraits.

Ingres seems to have tired of his English sitters. The money he received was scarcely enough to keep him and his wife alive. (He estimated late in life that he had drawn about three hundred portraits. The aggregate sum



FIG. 8. — INGRES. — Lady with a Parasol, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

which he received for them would not today buy a single drawing!) Urged by the great friend of his early years in David's studio, the sculptor Bartolini, he moved to Florence. It was during his Florentine residence, 1820-1824, that Ingres drew the two large full-length portraits, the *Lady with a Parasol* (Fig. 8) and the *Young Man in a Top Hat* (Fig. 9). Both stand well forward, their tall slender figures nearly





FIG. 9. — INGRES. — Young Man in a Top Hat, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

filling the large page. Both are dressed with elegance and distinction.

The young man stands in a nonchalant attitude, his feet placed to show his slender spurs, a wand-like riding-crop balanced in his gloved fingers, his polished top-hat at a dashing angle. Below and behind him lies Florence, with the Duomo and the Bargello in outline and beyond them the hills of Fiesole against the sky. His cravat and vest have been heightened with white, and his suede trousers and gloves touched with white. White also indicates the sky over the Arno Valley. For all the classic character of its closed contours, clear pose and careful balance, the drawing is vividly, almost nostalgically romantic.

The *Lady with a Parasol* is a fair companion. Her wide-

brimmed bonnet, fringed parasol, be-ribboned taffeta dress, and elaborate shawl thrown casually over her left arm, are proper foils for his masculine elegance, as her oval thoughtful face is for his rounder, more mobile countenance. Behind and below her lie the Palazzo Vecchio and the tower of Santa Croce. At the lower left is the signature "*Ingres Del. Flor 1823.*" It is ironic that these two figures of superb assurance in line and conception should have been drawn in Florence during those very years when Ingres' fortunes and hopes reached their lowest ebb. With such performances to his credit, no wonder his faith in his own capacity remained unshakable.

Yet it was because of his work in Florence that his fortunes changed. The painting to which he had given so much thought and labor, and upon which he fastened his hopes, the *Vow of Louis XIII*, had an immediate and enormous success in Paris. Ingres returned to France, where he remained for more than a decade. He was again in Rome from 1835 to 1840, as director of the French Academy. After that he returned to Paris for the rest of his life, not counting holidays in the country and

his time at Dampierre.

During a journey to Normandy in 1844, he drew the only dull portrait in the Winthrop group, a standing figure of a young woman dressed in the costume and elaborate headdress of the city of Caen.

In 1848 his first wife, Madeleine Chapelle, died. Without her constant comfort and careful management the artist was lost. She had married him in Rome in 1813, coming down from France through the kind offices of friends, to marry a man she had never seen — and their married life had been serene and devoted. Realizing the plight of the artist without a wife's ministrations, his friends again took a hand and in 1852 arranged a marriage. The second marriage was also a success. Delphine Ramel proved herself an understanding companion, a wise counselor and a good manager. In the year of their marriage, Ingres drew her portrait (Bayonne), in which one can see all his affection for her. He also drew the portraits of her father and mother. At seventy-two his hand was steady, his interest in rendering volume had increased. The seated figures are, in scale, like the informal portraits of his youth,

but they are carefully placed and fully drawn. The pencil is a soft one on a brown paper to which the white of cuffs and cravat, lace handkerchief and ruffled bonnet, and the highlight on the faces lend a delightful animation. A corner of a mantel at the inside border of each drawing suggests that the parents-in-law were seated in their accustomed chairs either side of the fireplace. Both drawings are inscribed: "*J. Ingres Del à sa bonne famille Ramel, 1852.*" One may often suspect that the determined, uncompromising, indefatigable, stormy Ingres was lacking in humor. Yet in these two drawings of his old age there is a touch of humor mixed with affectionate understanding.

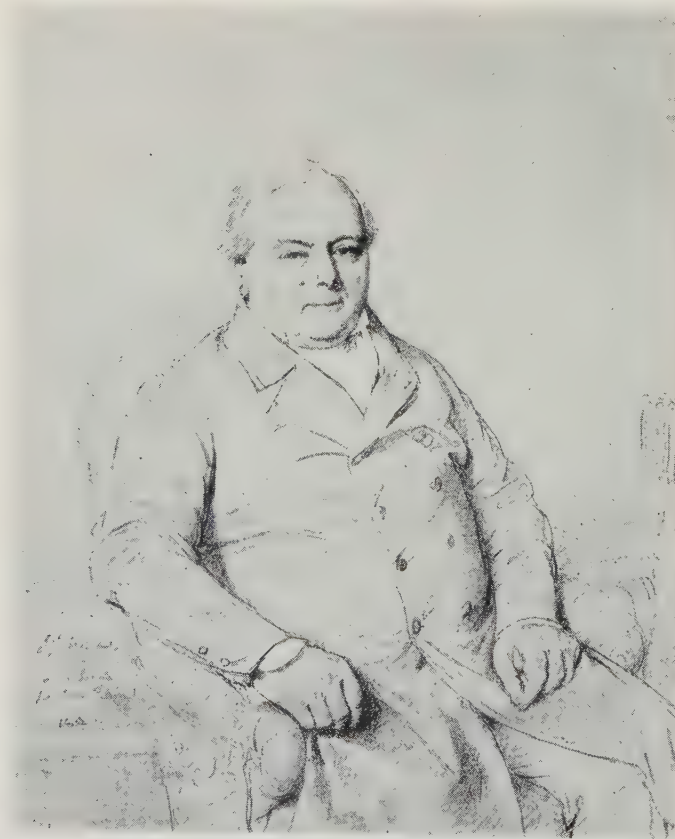


FIG. 10. — INGRES. — M. Ramel, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

The last portraits of the group, justly enough, bear upon



Ingres' artistic career — one officially, the other with a long backward glance. One is the formal, rather pompous portrait of the Superintendent of Fine Arts, *Comte Emilien de Nieuwerkerke*. Like the portraits of M. and Mme. Ramel (Figs. 10 and 11), it is drawn in soft black pencil with heightening in white on brown paper, but unlike the drawings of the Ramels, although powerful and accomplished, it has no inner warmth. The glance from the eyes of the aristocratic Nieuwerkerke, with whom Ingres now and then sharply took issue, is calculating and reserved, his pose theatrical. Ingres inscribed the drawing: "*Hommage du plus affectueux dévouement, Ingres, 1856.*" During Nieuwerkerke's lifetime it hung in his own bedroom in his apartment in the Louvre where Théophile Gautier saw and described it.

The other is of *Etienne-Jean Delécluze* (Fig. 12), the distinguished critic who contributed for years to Bertin's "Journal des Débats." At the very opening of the century he had been a fellow student of Ingres in David's studio. Gifted with a keen eye, he knew talent when he saw it. He recognized Ingres' special qualities even then. With equally clear vision he knew that he himself lacked real pictorial gifts, so he turned to criticism, a field in which he had a successful career. In his memoirs he has described the literary, social and artistic life of France covering a span of sixty years. Among his friends he counted philosophers and poets, artists and actors, novelists and pamphleteers, princes and politicians. He remained loyal to the friend of his youth and that friend returned the esteem. In the portrait drawing, on a table beside the informally posed figure with its thoughtful, reflective countenance, lie Delécluze's *Life of David*, his essays, and a third book that is perhaps his memoirs. Ingres, to make clear his own regard, has inscribed the drawing beneath the sitter's lettered name, "*Son ami et condisciple Del. vit J. Ingres 1856.*"



FIG. 11. — INGRES. — Mme. Ramel, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

Did Ingres ever join the group at Delécluze's simple but famous living quarters where so many gifted men gathered? Delécluze was not rich, but he was the center of a famous circle. "His rooms in the rue Gaillon were up exactly ninety-five steps, with a panorama of chimney pots to reward you when you got there; but all good conversationalists gathered there on Sundays, and Wednesdays, a few intimates came back again. They rewrote all French literature as politicians remake the map of Europe, after dinner. . . . Every Wednesday night, Dominique (Stendahl) would climb the ninety-five steps and fall panting on a sofa, while the habitués, Stapfer, J. J. Ampère, Viollet-le-Duc, Merimée, etc. . . . wondered if he were in good or bad humor . . ."<sup>15</sup> That was in 1825. Thirty-six years later, when he posed for Ingres the scene had doubtless changed, but Delécluze's own qualities remained firm. Time has dulled the bitterness of his and Ingres' life-long battle against Romanticism. It has not dimmed the quality of their true talents.

*"L'expression de la peinture exige une très-grande science du dessin; car l'expression ne peut être bonne si elle n'a été formulée avec une justesse absolue. Ne la saisir qu'à peu près, c'est la manquer; c'est ne représenter que des gens faux qui s'étudieraient à contrefaire des sentiments qu'ils n'éprouvent pas. On ne peut parvenir à cette extrême précision que par le plus sûr talent dans le dessin. Aussi les peintres d'expression, parmi les modernes, ont-ils été les plus grands dessinateurs. Voyez Raphaël;*

*"L'expression, partie essentielle de l'art, est donc intimement liée à la forme . . ."*<sup>16</sup>

It is Ingres, himself, speaking. How consciously and with what science he sought expression through form, few drawings can show more clearly than four separate studies of hands from three different portraits: the right hand of M. Bertin (Fig. 13), the right hand of the Duc d'Orléans, and the two hands of Count Molé. Their relationship to great Renaissance drawings is astonishingly clear. They demonstrate precisely what Ingres meant when he used the word "expression." If the magnificent *Portrait of M. Bertin* no longer existed, we could still know, from the drawing of this hand alone, a great deal about that forceful figure in XIX Century journalism — about his energy, his power and his ambition. It is as instinct with his particular life as is the rest of his corpulent, bourgeois figure. Ingres himself told how long he sought the gesture and pose which would reveal his sitter's character.

The hands of the other two men are as aristocratic and sensitive as Bertin's is forceful. How much of Count Molé one knows from his restrained hand holding the magnifying glass with such casual elegance, or of the Duc d'Orléans by the manner in which he grasps his gloves! All four are drawn in soft pencil on tracing

15. P. HAZARD. *Stendhal (Henri Beyle)*, New York, 1929, pp. 206-207.

16. A. DELABORDE, *Op. cit.*, p. 127.



paper and inscribed by the artist. There is evidence that Ingres himself regarded them with favor, for they were in the exhibition of his drawings held at the Salon des Arts-Unis in 1861, an exhibition in which the master took a particular interest. They were listed by Galichon that year in the "Gazette des Beaux-Arts."<sup>17</sup>

A pencil study of the head, forearms and hands of a half-length nude female figure is one of the preparatory studies for the *Fornarina*. An academic figure of a nude youth standing with his back turned, and a study in black chalk heightened with white of a draped figure with up-raised arms, perhaps one of the preliminary studies for *L'Age d'Or*, are not definitely connected with any painting. A rather enigmatic



FIG. 12. — INGRES. — M. Etienne-Jean Delécluze, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

drawing large in scale and free in handling of the *Turbaned Head of a Girl* dedicated to Calamatta may represent Calamatta's daughter, Lina, who married Maurice Sand. Lina was Ingres' god-daughter. This drawing also belonged to Degas.

A small watercolor version of the Louvre *Baigneuse*, with the finish and the subtle color harmonies of the oil translated into the watercolor medium, comes from the Collection of Mme. Albert Ramel, who received it from her aunt, Mme. Ingres.

Quite different in character and, obviously, in purpose is a small pen drawing of *St. Helena Holding the Cross*. A fine pen line, and sepia wash cover the delicate pencil indications. St. Helena in imperial robes stands with downcast eyes in front of a Byzantine, cushioned throne. With her right hand she offers alms. In the background is a view of Jerusalem. Over her head two Botticelliesque angels hold a circular medallion with the words, "*Diva Helena*." The drawing has the definition, the detail and the formal qualities of a Quattrocento rather than a XIX Century

17. *Op. cit.*, p. 356.



FIG. 13. — INGRES. — Hand of M. Bertin, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

drawing. It is inscribed: "à Mlle. Hélène Palafox y Silva, Comtesse de Sta. Eufemia. Par son très humble et très obéissant Serviteur, J. A. Ingres." That charming, personal inscription seems to explain the reason for the drawing's existence.

It was in Rome in 1812 that Ingres set to work upon the large *Dream of Ossian* which, with the *Romulus Conqueror of Acron* was to decorate the palace at Monte Cavallo which expected Napoleon's visit. Napoleon's fondness for the Gaelic legend was well known, so the choice of

subject seemed appropriate — but it must have been a subject that appealed to Ingres even before he had received the official commission, for the watercolor in the Winthrop Collection is signed and dated: "*Ingres inv. et pinx. Roma, 1809*" (Fig. 14).

Here in the first decade of the XIX Century, the artist of strong classical tastes takes as his subject a high romantic theme with all the movement, the color and the emotion that the subject evokes. Ossian, draped in pale violet, is seated on a rock, his harp beside him, his folded arms resting on a cloud as he dreams of Fingal. The armed heroes stand in serried ghostly ranks upon the snowy clouds, while the sound of wind, and of the harps played by the flying maidens, fills the air. There is the moon shining balefully through the storm-rent clouds on the pale blue hosts, and the rushing mountain waters — all described in the book of Fingal. The artist has not yet added, as he did in the official version, "the grey dogs [that] howl between." Ingres could have known MacPherson's tale through the French translation published by Didot in 1801. Girodet's *Ossian Receiving the French Heroes* (Salon of 1802) may have suggested its pictorial possibilities to Ingres. Obviously, he knew, through a drawing or print, Gérard's *Ossian* painted in 1809 for the King of Sweden.<sup>18</sup>

Equally romantic in theme but like an antique cameo in its perfection of contour, is a slight sketch in pencil for the *Roger et Angélique* of 1819.

Its delicate precision and small scale (16.9 mm. x 20.2 mm.) should be contrasted with a large drawing, almost like a late Raphael in its freedom of line and its

18. INGRES wrote GÉRARD from Rome, Feb. 2, 1812: "... car vos conseils et la vue de vos beaux ouvrages m'en ont toujours plus appris que ceux des autres." In 1818 he wrote thanking Gérard for the gift of a print of his *Austerlitz*. *Lettres adressées au Baron François Gérard*, Paris, 1886, vol. I, pp. 259, 261.



mastery of form, a crayon study for his first idea for the *Vow of Louis XIII* of 1823. It is known that he first planned an *Assumption of the Virgin*. This study was obviously drawn with that in mind, for the Madonna is a full-length standing figure, her hands joined in an attitude of prayer.

One thinks again of Raphael when looking at the drawing of two nudes (Fig. 15), a man and woman, one of the more than five hundred studies for *L'Age d'Or* which Ingres painted for the Duc de Luynes' chateau at Dampierre. These two



FIG. 14. — INGRES. — The Dream of Ossian, painting. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

nudes figured in his early sketches, but were much altered in the painting. As in his portrait drawings, he creates form by contour, and by a delicate shading of tiny parallel lines. It is the Golden Age of antiquity seen through the teaching of Raphael.

Delaborde has said that Ingres' long life of toil had "all the inflexible continuity of a straight line."<sup>19</sup> His sober, severe and industrious nature was, through those very qualities, tenacious of principles and hostile to innovations. His early teachings established his tastes, his habits and his ideals. He was true to them with a dogged devotion that is as rare as it is astonishing in one having his manual

dexterity and acute vision. A soaring imagination was not one of his gifts. Had it been, could he have returned again and again to the same subjects, as he did throughout his life?

19. DELABORDE, *Op. cit.*, p. 11.



FIG. 15. — INGRES. — Two Nudes, study for *l'Age d'Or*, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

There are two studies in the Winthrop Collection for the *Virgil Reading the Aeneid*. Although the ideal of form which Ingres was pursuing was a sculptural one, each ghostly figure in these drawings expresses its particular and personal emotional reaction to the intense drama of the moment. The two studies were made in preparation for the version of 1819 now in the Brussels Museum — the version which repeats only the three central figures of Augustus, Octavia and Olivia. The Louvre drawing of 1830, made for the engraver, returned to the large composition of 1812, but in 1830 Ingres added the statue of Marcellus. Still he was not satisfied. Much later he drew the scene again, this time adding watercolor to the robes and draperies. The watercolor version, also in the Winthrop

Collection, is on tracing paper. It is signed: "*Ingres inv. del. Paris, 1850.*" Formerly it was in the Collection of Frederick Reiset, the director of the Museums of France, whose lovely blonde wife Ingres painted (Winthrop Collection). In this 1850 *Virgil*, Ingres has altered the design of the pavement, and changed the lighting from one of dramatic light and shadow, to one of fairly even emphasis. There is no other obvious reason for the repetition.

It has been said that, "in his numerous written notices on his own work, Ingres never reveals his direct antique sources . . . he seems to have been ashamed of his own borrowings from Greek work . . ." <sup>20</sup> It has been impossible to consult the notebooks at Montauban, but I venture to suggest that there the statement could be disproved. We can disprove it later. It is possible, however, that Ingres did not see any necessity for acknowledging his sources. Those who read the books he read, would have known immediately. It must have been in his early years in Paris that

20. I. BLUM, *Ingres, Classicist and Antiquarian*, in: "Art in America," vol. XXIV, 1936, p. 11.



he studied Visconti's vast volumes, *Il Museo Pio-Clementino*,<sup>21</sup> for in the painting of *Ambassador of Agamemnon*, which won him the Prix de Rome in 1801, he clearly took his figures from Visconti's illustrations, and not as has been suggested, from Greek vases.<sup>22</sup> In the center background, the figure with his legs crossed derives from the Vatican *Ganymede*,<sup>23</sup> and the chief of the Greek Army is none other than that of *Phocion*<sup>24</sup> with the position of one leg slightly altered.

How many other engravings did the earnest young artist copy? Perhaps a visit to Montauban would reveal. Surely he also made a drawing of *Hadrian* in the role of Mars<sup>25</sup> and used it, years afterwards, changing very slightly the angle of the dagger and shield, for the figure of Marcellus which he added to his later version of *Virgil Reading the Aeneid*. The fact that all these figures are depicted from precisely the angles shown in the engraved illustrations of the early volumes, supports this thesis.

He must first have known Greek antiquities largely through the volumes of d'Hancarville and the Comte de Caylus. In fact the former may be

the one who early strengthened his love for Raphael, because d'Hancarville wrote that it was only through Raphael that one could come to know the majesty of the

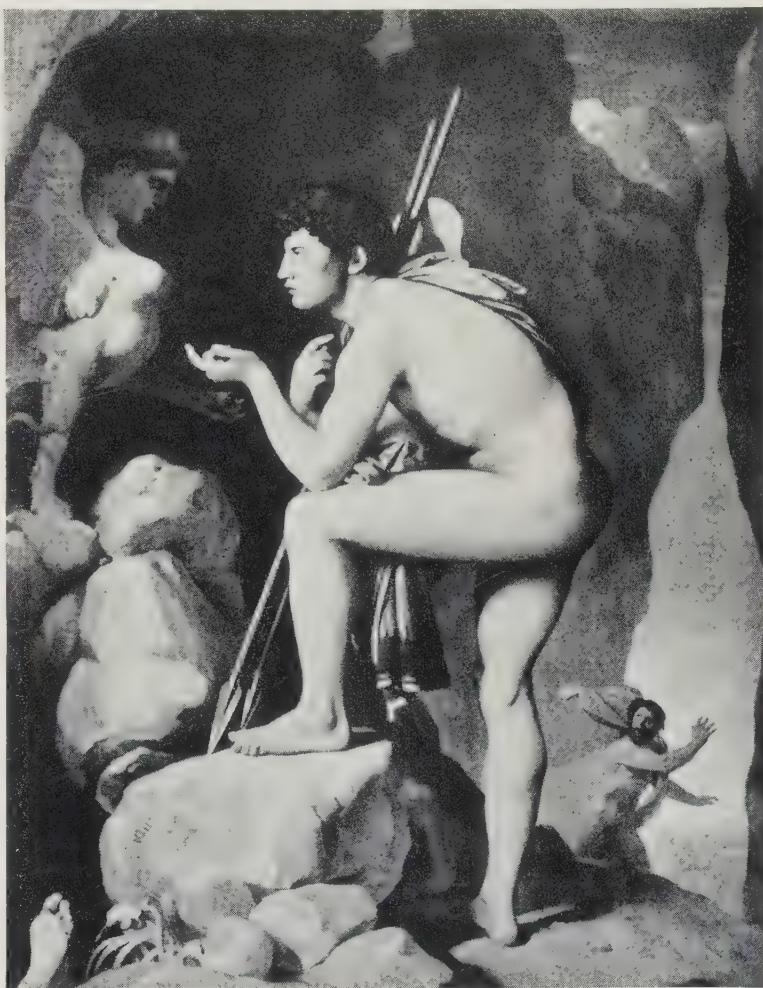


FIG. 16. — INGRES. — Oedipus and the Sphinx, painting. — Louvre, Paris.

21. G. B. VISCONTI AND E. Q. VISCONTI, *Il Museo Pio-Clementino*, Rome, 1782-1807.

22. E. S. KING, *Ingres as Classicist*, in: "Journal of the Walters Gallery," vol. V, 1942, p. 75.

23. VISCONTI AND VISCONTI, *Op. cit.*, vol. II, pl. XXXV.

24. *IBID.*, pl. XLIII.

25. *IBID.*, pl. XLIX.



FIG. 17. — Carved Carnelian, engraving, in: COMTE DE CAYLUS, *Recueil d'Antiquités* . . .

ancient world. And Comte de Caylus' seven volumes would have offered him endless examples of antique gems, vases and sculptures. Delaborde<sup>26</sup> describes Ingres' studious habits: "... pendant bien longtemps Ingres, trop pauvre pour acheter les livres dont il aurait eu besoin, s'imposait la tâche de transcrire, à mesure que ces livres lui étaient prêtés, tout ce qu'il jugeait propre à instruire son intelligence ou à féconder son talent." Delaborde does not name any authors but there is ample proof that de Caylus was among them.

Lapauze records<sup>27</sup> that among the youthful drawings by Ingres preserved at Montauban are "*plusieurs planches tirées du Recueil d'antiquités du Comte de Caylus*."<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately he gives no further identification, but we can come

close to surmising which figures Ingres copied and which chapters he studied if we consult de Caylus with Ingres' own oeuvre in mind. The figure of Ingres' *Oedipus* (Fig. 16) surely owes something to the illustration of an antique gem which de Caylus reproduces in his first volume (Fig. 17).<sup>29</sup> As for the Theban Sphinx, which clearly derives from the Sphinx of Ephesus, she too owes her appearance to de Caylus. The latter reproduces four versions of the Greek Sphinx: a relief on a lead weight, a coin, an altar relief, and a Roman copy of a lost Greek original.<sup>30</sup> In all these examples the Sphinx appears ALONE, so that de Caylus's text which accompanies the illustration of volume III is doubly interesting. "*Le Sphinx n'était en quelque façon connu dans la Grèce que par l'histoire d'Oedipe; on ne le voit même sur quelques pierres gravées, représenté de la même manière qu'il paroît sous ce Numéro, lorsqu'il propose à ce Prince une énigme qui ne mérite guère d'être si célébrée. Le Sphinx est encore traité de la même façon sur le revers des médailles d'Antioche et sur un poids de plomb trouvé dans l'Isle de Chio.*"<sup>31</sup> Ces différents emplois du même objet méritent d'être présentés: ils sont capables de piquer la curiosité; et font naître

26. DELABORDE, *Op. cit.*, p. 5.

27. LAPAUZE, *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

28. COMTE DE CAYLUS, *Recueil d'Antiquités Egyptiennes, Etrusques, Grecques et Romaines*, Paris, 7 vols., 1762-1765.

29. *IBID.*, vol. I, pl. XLIX, III. The head of Oedipus is from an engraved carnelian reproduced on the same page.

30. *IBID.*, vol. I, pl. XLIX, I and II; vol. II, pl. LIV, and vol. III, pl. LX, III.

31. *IBID.*, vol. II, pl. XLIX.



*l'envie de chercher pourquoi les Grecs ont adapté le Sphinx, pourquoi ils ne l'ont point représenté accroupi; enfin pourquoi ils lui ont donné des ailes, sur l'arrondissement desquelles j'ai déjà témoigné ma surprise."* One can almost see the youthful Ingres musing on the theme that de Caylus thus suggests. I might add that the Sphinx on the medal of Antiochus and the one on the altar both hold their front inner leg out-stretched.<sup>32</sup>

Anyone who may still doubt that the de Caylus volumes were the source not only of subject-matter but of actual compositions as well, need only turn to the illustration of a carved carnelian<sup>33</sup> (Fig. 19). De Caylus writes in the text that, according to Pausanias, the gem derived its design from the famous *Zeus* of Phidias, a statement that obviously impressed Ingres. He used the central figure of *Zeus* three times, first in the *Portrait of Napoleon* of 1806 (Fig. 18), then in the *Jupiter and Thetis* begun in 1807 and finished in 1811 (Fig. 22)<sup>34</sup> and finally in the *Birth of the Muses* of 1856.

32. See also: P. GILBERT, *Un Modèle Egyptien de Phidias*, in: "Chronique d'Egypte," July 1944, pp. 207-208, and FRITZ EICHLER, *Thebanische Sphinx*, in: "Jahreshefte des Oesterreichischen Archäologischen Institutes in Wien," XXX, 1937, pp. 75-110.

33. CAYLUS, *Op. cit.*, vol. I, pl. XLVI.

34. Here he also remembered Gérard's plate for the *Aeneid*, Book VIII.



FIG. 18. — INGRES. — Portrait of Napoleon I, painting, 1806. — Invalides Museum, Paris.

In the *Napoleon* and in the *Jupiter and Thetis* Ingres has reversed the design, as he did in the case of the figures of both *Oedipus* and the Sphinx. In his last version, the Lapauze watercolor, Jupiter (or Zeus) appears exactly as he appeared in the de Caylus illustration. (It is worth noting that in the last version of the *Oedipus*, the version of 1864,

in the Walters Gallery, Baltimore, Ingres reversed his own earlier composition).

The young artist could have paid the Emperor no higher compliment

than to place him as he believed the greatest of the Greeks had placed Zeus, upon a hieractical throne, the emblems of his immense authority in each hand. Even the eagle is present, transformed into a design in the carpet beneath Napoleon's feet. No wonder Ingres was enraged when he learned in Rome that his painting, of purest Greek inspiration and of highly classical intent, had been called "Gothic" by the critics. Its very faults of coldness and stiffness are explained to a certain degree when one considers that it was inspired by an XVIII Century engraving of an antique gem.<sup>35</sup>

Was it stubbornness or was it solemn conviction which held him to his first ideas? It almost seems as though any theme



FIG. 19. — Carved Carnelian, engraving, in: COMTE DE CAYLUS, *Recueil d'Antiquités* . . .



FIG. 20. — Lithograph after a Greek vase, from CH. LENORMANT, *Elite des Monuments* . . .

35. Since the above was written I have come upon a description of a notebook of Ingres' which belonged to M. Guille. Folio 8 has the heading in Ingres' hand: *Ouvrages d'art à revoir, à faire copier ou calquer, ou à lire.*" The books of both CAYLUS and D. HANCARVILLE are in the list which follows (LAPAUZE, *Les Dessins de J. A. D. Ingres du Musée de Montauban*, Paris, 1901, pp. 242-243.





FIG. 21. — INGRES. — Rape of Europa, watercolor. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

In 1858 he repeated, in a detailed drawing, his *St. Symphorien* altarpiece finished in 1834. And in 1864 he drew once again, with watercolor, the scene of *Cardinal Bibiena Fiancing his Niece to Raphael* — a subject he had first drawn in 1812. Both are in the Winthrop bequest.

The last drawing in the group is one of the most curious. A *Rape of Europa* (Fig. 21), it is a watercolor in which every inch of the page is brightly colored. Below the scene at the left Ingres has written: "*J. Ingres F.<sup>n</sup> sur un trait de vase grec. 1865.*" Beneath its title, in the

or composition he once attempted gained such a place in his affections that he was loathe to leave it.

In 1844 he drew the charming small, Raphael-esque watercolor of *The Madonna and Child Adored by St. Anthony of Padua and St. Leopold*. In 1855 he presented it to his wife with the dedication: "*à Madame Ingres.*"



FIG. 22. — INGRES. — Jupiter and Thetis, painting. — Museum of Aix-en-Provence, France.

center, he has added: "*Plin parle d'un tableau d'Antyphile qui représente Europe. Peut-être cette composition est-elle une imitation de cet ouvrage célèbre ou une autre de Pythagoras peintre et sculpteur.*" The vase is in the British Museum.<sup>36</sup> Ingres seems to have known it not in the original but through the publication of a friend, the critic Charles Lenormant, who reproduced it in facsimile (Fig. 20).<sup>37</sup> The fact that the vase has been somewhat restored and that in the facsimile this restoration is not quite understood, seems to explain Ingres' turning the tail of the dolphin in front of the bull into a kind of crab. But how different is the effect of the two — the reds and blacks of the Greek vase; the turquoise, vermillion and pale violet of Ingres' water-color!

We know that in his last years Ingres copied a Holbein and that his last work of all was a tracing after Giotto's noble *Entombment*. In 1821 he had written: "I think I shall know how to be original even when imitating." At the age of eighty-five he is in the *Rape of Europa* once again proclaiming and proving that belief.

Through unremitting labor, steadfast purpose, and an austere ideal strongly defended, he succeeded not only in obtaining that personal originality which stamps every work from his practiced hand, but he proved once more Focillon's thesis of the life of forms.

July, 1945.

AGNES MONGAN.



FIG. 23. — INGRES. — Lady Seated in an Arm Chair, drawing. — Winthrop Collection, Fogg Museum of Art, Cambridge, Mass.

36. H. B. WALTERS, *Catalogue of the Greek Etruscan Vases in the British Museum*, London, 1896, vol. IV, p. 95, No. F 184.

37. CH. LENORMANT ET J. DE WITTE, *Elite des Monuments Céramographiques*, Paris, 1884, vol. I, pl. XXVII.





# WHAT DEGAS LEARNED FROM MANTEGNA

*"Un tableau est une chose qui exige autant de  
rouerie, de malice et de vice que la perpétra-  
tion d'un crime."*

(DEGAS)

**M**OST of the writers dealing with Degas in his early years, mention his copies of the old masters, and among them those of Mantegna.<sup>1</sup> When an

1. BENDER, in: THIEME-BECKER, VIII, p. 542, wrote in 1912, when Degas was still living, that Degas went to Italy in 1856, first of all for the sake of Mantegna and Ghirlandajo. PAUL LAFOND, *Degas*, 1918, I, p. 32 says: "*Dans sa jeunesse il a exécuté de nombreux dessins et diverses copies après Mantegna, Ghirlandajo, Botticelli, Fra Angelico. . .*" *Op. cit.*, p. 85: "*Il s'enthousiasmait particulièrement du naïf archaïsme et du dilettantisme raffiné de Mantegna.*" J. MEIER-GRAEFE, *Degas*, Munich, 1920, p. 6: "He drew much in Rome, after Mantegna as well as from nature . . ." p. 7: "Copied Mantegna in the Louvre . . ." same page, note 3: "Many of these copies originate from a later period." As late as in the 1870's he was still keen on copying. Degas' copy of Mantegna's *Crucifixion* formed part of the first exhibition of Degas' estate. (*Atelier Edgar Degas, Première Vente, Catalogue des Tableaux*, etc., Paris, Galerie Georges-Petit, May 8th, 1918, No. 103; Canvas 0.67 to 0.92.)

artist living in Paris in the second half of the XIX Century made copies of paintings by old masters in the Louvre, he did not so merely for the purpose of preserving a record of the compositions. For fledgling artists of earlier centuries, making copies from famous compositions was a customary device for improving their own work. In the late XIX Century mechanical reproductions served the same purpose, while at the same time the artists and the public shared in the preference for independent interpretation of traditional subjects, thus considerably curtailing the need for classical models. If, therefore, an artist copied the work of an old master he did so in order to learn something definite from him. In most cases presumably his specific brushwork, the color effects achieved by juxtaposition and mixture of pigments which might be elucidated by reconstruction of the layers. Occasionally some peculiarities of composition might be brought to light by the



FIG. 1 — DEGAS. — Dancers, with Cello. — Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

intensive concentration necessary for making a copy. These are the experiences the copyist consciously gains from his model. Along with them, however, other features of the model may unconsciously be absorbed, take root in his imagination, and result in new and personal effects.

If we are told of Degas' special interest in the art of Mantegna we shall be led to examine his oeuvre both for what he learned from Mantegna because he was searching for it, and what he learned unconsciously. In either case the examination will be a delicate, critical task. An artist of Degas' caliber is not suspect of crude imitation. His personality is so strong that any impulse working from the outside must have been so thoroughly absorbed and digested that the original impulse would be hard to isolate. I consider it more interesting and important to start with traits which Degas may consciously have studied in Mantegna.





FIG. 2. — DEGAS. — Study of Dancers. — Formerly Schmitz Collection.

dark spots." There are always lines to help; in the early compositions occasionally even a complicated scaffold of lines. In the later compositions, it is true, they are limited to a few principal lines — remnants of the earlier richer constructions which give the onlooker the sensation of space. This linear construction is according to the same rules which Mantegna used in his early works — those works in which he was primarily interested in problems of space. Compare Mantegna's murals presenting interiors, in the Eremitani Church<sup>3</sup> with Degas' *Répétition de Danse*, in the Frick Collection, (Fig. 5) or *Classe de Danse* in the Louvre;<sup>4</sup> in both, the floor is seen from above and the horizon is placed very high. Behind, there is a wall set parallel to the picture plane. The perspective lines are

The most striking difference between Degas and his immediate predecessors and contemporaries is his rendering of space, and closely connected with this, his presentation of movement; furthermore, connected with both of these is his way of cutting off his figures, a procedure usually considered the result of Japanese influence. These three characteristics of his composition were derived from Mantegna's art and further developed by Degas. The description given by Max Liebermann in his pamphlet on Degas,<sup>2</sup> of the latter's approach to space, is not correct: "The distance from one object to the other in some cases produces the whole composition. No line, only — as in nature — luminous and help; in the early compositions occasion-



FIG. 3. — DEGAS. — Dancer at the Photographer's. — Museum of Modern Western Painting, Moscow.

2. First published in 1896, third edition, p. 16.

3. *Klassiker der Kunst*, vol. 16, *Mantegna*, pp. 2, 3,

6 and 7.

4. LAFOND, *Op. cit.*, I, pls. 9 and 41.

well marked in the floor pattern and converge outside the painting.

A construction of this sort produces a very intense sensation of depth because the spectator's gaze carried outside the painting is compelled to return to it anew in order to gather in its contents, but hardly has the eye begun to gather them in and to grope its way through space, when it is again driven out by the strongly marked perspective lines. The purpose of such construction is not only to create spatial depth, but also to fill with abundant vitality each separate element of the composition which those lines of demarcation frame. Every foreshortening — in Mantegna's painting the *Removal of the Corpse of St. Christopher*, the giant recumbent on the floor, in Degas' painting in the Metropolitan Museum (Fig. 1)



FIG. 4. — DEGAS. — Dancers at the Bar. — Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.





FIG. 5. — DEGAS. — The Rehearsal. — Frick Collection, New York.

the cello — becomes a volume thrusting into depth with intense impact on the onlooker. In compositions such as Degas' *Danseuses à la Barre*, in the Metropolitan Museum (Fig. 4) where a watering pot forms part of the dynamism of the dominating lines, the efficacy of the scheme becomes especially evident. The utensil with its spout gives the sensation of a live bird stretching its neck. Degas once called a painting "more complex than a crime."

To what extent the use of perspective lines was a conscious and refined means for achieving movement, can easily be recognized when Degas adopts contrasting methods to produce the sensation of stiffness. A good example is *La Danseuse chez le Photographe*, in the Museum of Modern Western Painting, in Moscow (Fig. 3).<sup>5</sup> Here again the space is confined by a straight wall containing the windows. In this case, however, the pattern of the floor shows only parallel horizontals incapable of producing depth. Thus they do not produce movement either. The dancer is standing with one foot on tiptoe, lifting her arms above her head, in

5. LAFOND, *Op. cit.*, II, the illustration before p. 37.



FIG. 6. — DEGAS. — *La Fille de Jephté*. — Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, Mass.

a pirouette that seems frozen — frozen for the sake of the slow-working lens of the camera. By the parallel lines of the floor pattern the pose has been stiffened, as the subject of the picture demanded.

According to Liebermann, the manner of cutting off the compositions is the most striking feature of Degas' paintings. He illustrates this statement with a reference to Degas' famous *Portrait of Count Lépic*.<sup>6</sup> This typical cutting off of figures is also a means of producing depth. The missing portion is unconsciously added by the onlooker, a co-operation which intensifies his sensation of space. Nobody has made more use of this expedient than Mantegna. In his *Calvary* in the Louvre (Fig. 7),<sup>7</sup> the painting copied by Degas, the figure of the warrior is cut by the frame just as Count Lépic's and his daughters' are in Degas' painting. Mantegna's figures overlapping the borders of a composition, his partly cut bodies belong to the same category.

In the early works all these contacts with solutions found by Mantegna are

6. This is the painting to which FOCILLON in *La Peinture aux XIX et XX Siècles* (Paris, 1928, p. 182) has devoted a sensitive analysis: "Pour la première fois peut-être dans l'histoire de la peinture, le portrait échappe à sa définition abstraite, il se mêle à la vie; l'être humain ne se suffit plus comme âme et comme visage, il fait partie d'un milieu et il passe . . ."

7. *Klassiker*, *Op. cit.*, p. 82.





FIG. 7. — MANTEGNA. — Crucifixion from the predella of the S. Zeno altarpiece. — Louvre, Paris.

easily noticed. Later Degas drew on the results of his studies with greater ease. The closing wall paralleling the picture plane shrinks and is finally wholly canceled; the lateral wall thrust into depth is all that is left over from the original structure, but even this aid is frequently suggested by only a line on the floor at the place where the wall should stand. The line must suffice to lead into depth. The severed heads and limbs have also another function now. Missing portions will still be supplemented by imagination, but no longer with the former energy. The impulse to supplement becomes less urgent. The eliminated elements now help to emphasize still further those given in full by the artist because they are the more important for him. The gaps are now like dashes serving to accentuate the sentence they frame.

A manner of composing that is typical of Degas is his liking for juxtaposing, clearly and broadly, frontal and back views, or profiles turned to the left and others turned to the right. All these elements are thoroughly fused and are bound within one smoothly swinging rhythm, as if one figure were presented in various

essential views. This pattern has become important for the subsequent evolution which favored such effects in posters.

Such effects produced by juxtaposition of the principal views, can be traced back to Mantegna. In him, however, such contrast for the sake of expression remains in the initial stage, and is never stylized into an ornamental pattern. On the whole, this trait is not so striking in Mantegna that Degas would have expressly sought it out. More likely it influenced Degas without his being aware of it.<sup>8</sup>

Along with such casual stimulation apparently explained by similarity of aim, we notice also a more immediate influence which might be expected to be more transient and restricted to the early period. The nude youths in the *Challenge of the Spartan Women*, at the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge,<sup>9</sup> the young warriors in *Jephtah's Daughter* in the Smith College Art Museum, Northampton, Mass., (Fig. 6), belong to the group of unsought after-effects. Most of all the group of women in the background of *Jephtah's Daughter* is illuminating. It is patterned after the group of the Marys in the background of Mantegna's *Calvary* copied by Degas. This group, however, is constructed more solidly, comparable to a wall. And, as in the model, in its late reflection too, the most tender gesture branching out from the compact group is loaded with a maximum of expression.

January 6, 1945.

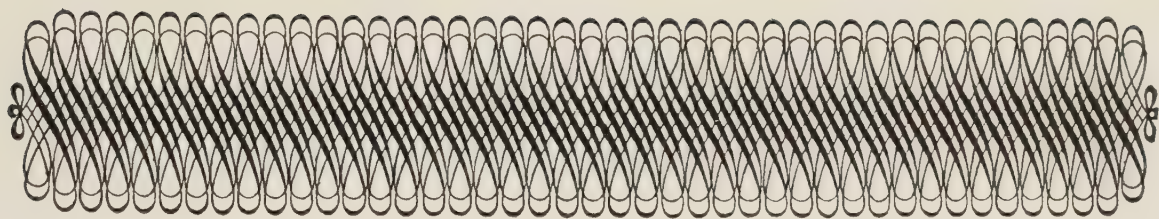
E. TIETZE-CONRAT.



8. The best example would be the group at the right in Mantegna's *Removal of the Corpse of St. Christopher*. Compare it with Degas' *Rehearsal* in the Metropolitan Museum.

9. LAFOND, *Op. cit.*, I, pp. 13 and 17.





# THE ART OF SEURAT

**T**HE personality of Seurat who died in 1891, at the age of thirty-one, was so complex that for a long time he was not understood. And even today, after he has been extolled as one of the greatest French painters, and has been studied thoroughly and accurately, it seems that more remains to be said about his quality as an artist.

It was Seurat himself who built up the first barrier against an understanding of his art, by saying: "Men of letters and critics find poetry in what I am doing. No, I am applying a method, and that is all." Of course, today it is easy to guess that what Seurat really meant to do was to refuse the translation of his qualities as a painter into literature. But poetry in painting, besides having a literary

value, has another meaning: that of human sensibility pervading any form or color, thus identifying poetry with art in general. In spite of Seurat's speaking of his method, and not of his system, his saying was generally interpreted as a rebuke to any esthetic approach to his theoretical, purely ideological system. Such misunderstanding has only been partially corrected, because of the widespread ideological prejudices in art during the last thirty years. It reappears surreptitiously in various disguises even after it seemed to have been definitely discarded. In fact, the relation between Seurat's artistic feeling and his method is the central problem in the criticism of his art.

All the data about the life, the work and the theory of Seurat can be found in the monographs on him by L. Cousturier, 1921; W. Pach, 1923; G. Coquiôt, 1924; G. Kahn, 1928; D. C. Rich, 1935; J. Rewald, 1943; and also in books like P. Signac's *D'Eugène Delacroix au Néo-Impressionnisme*, 1899; R. Fry's *Transformations*, 1926; R. Rey's *La Renaissance du Sentiment Classique*, 1931. The article of R. J. Goldwater—*Some Aspects of the Development of Seurat's Style*—in "Art Bulletin," 1941, should also be mentioned. These writings, taken together, give an accurate description of what Seurat's pointillism or divisionism is, of his "classical trend" in composition, of his abstract composition of line, of his affinity with Symbolism and with the decorative taste flourishing at the end of the XIX Century. Almost all these descriptions are successful, but they occupy the critic's mind to such an extent that, even with the best critics, they hinder the consideration of Seurat's artistic personality. It is difficult to find the clear consciousness that, above any Pointillism, Classicism, or Symbolism, reveals Seurat as the great poet that he was. I do remember that Henri Focillon was conscious of that fact: he was not quite alone, but almost so.

The story regarding the appreciation of Seurat is quite sad. Contemporaries were intrigued by Pointillism. In spite of the fact that they felt the unusual stature of the painter, they fought in favor of, or against Pointillism, as though Pointillism represented the whole of Seurat. If they became aware of his line and space compositions, they considered them as conventionalities which he would have surpassed, had he lived a little longer. This was a mistaken interpretation, for Seurat emphasized his lines just in his last works. But it is interesting to realize that such an error was based on a sound tradition of art criticism: to refuse any deliberate abstraction or calculation not founded on artistic feeling. So it seems Angrand expressed a common opinion among artists when he preferred Seurat's "absolutely beautiful" landscapes to the compositions "in which he was demonstrating."<sup>1</sup>

The early death of Seurat—Pointillism after him becoming "routine"—the sudden rise of Gauguin, Van Gogh, Toulouse-Lautrec, and finally the world-

1. COQUIÔT, *Op. cit.*, p. 168.



wide triumph of Cézanne and his theory, all contributed to the relative oblivion of Seurat until the First World War. Even when the trend toward abstraction reached its climax with Cubism, Cézanne was considered the prophet of abstraction, not Seurat.

It was Lucie Cousturier, a follower of Seurat, who in 1912 and 1914, wrote that Seurat was "the father of the present constructors, as well as Cézanne, but with a more subtle and modern expressive geometry." It fell to André Salmon to launch "the Revelation of Seurat" (*Propos d'Atelier*), which consisted of despising not only Impressionism, but Cézanne himself, in order to install Seurat near Raphael, and to extoll conscious theory far above feeling and sensibility in art. This was a reaction against any kind of freedom, so characteristic of the nineteen twenties, a reaction which has only brought sterility and death. And it was also a result of the growing critical consciousness of Cubism and, in general, of the abstract in art. Pointillism was more or less forgotten, because of its desire for light, an element of nature, and a poor expression of sensibility! . . . And architectural composition, the work of pure intelligence, was stressed as the real art of Seurat. Of course the best critics did not fall into any such traps. Roger Fry, for example, understood that Seurat's personality was compounded of "his extreme and delicate sensibility" and "a passion for logical abstraction and an almost mathematical precision of mind." Thus Fry realized that while Seurat's landscapes are always of high quality, his last compositions of figures were too much a demonstration of method and did not have enough natural creativeness, such "as a melody suggesting itself to a musician."

\* \* \*

An adequate pleading for the most famous composition of Seurat has been made by D. C. Rich in his book *Seurat and the Evolution of "La Grande Jatte,"* (1935). Here we find the critical judgment that this final big painting is superior to any sketch or study, because it "possesses a more complex and integrated scheme" and "likewise gains remarkably in increasing the effect of volumes in space." "In general, as he progressed, Seurat drew out his figures for expressive as well as compositional reasons." It is true that Mr. Rich is aware of the distinction between artist and scientist, when he says: "The artist in Seurat far exceeded the scientist. Always his knowledge is at the command of his feeling." From these remarks, Mr. Rich drew the conclusion that Seurat's was "the organizing mind of the classical artist," that he belonged "to that side of the French Revolution which has returned from time to time, to the tranquillizing arts of Greece and Rome." After that, Ingres and Poussin, Raphael and Piero della Francesca, and Puvis de Chavannes, become the forefathers or cousins of Seurat.

But, as Mr. Goldwater has shown, in the last five years of Seurat's life, that



FIG. 1. — CAMILLE PISSARRO. — *Chemin Creux, Vue sur Epluches*, 1881. — Göteborg Museum, Göteborg, Sweden.

is, immediately after having completed the *Grande Jatte*, he gradually modified his style, stressing the decorative pattern of the surface, disregarding the space composition, and advancing on the same roads that Gauguin, Whistler<sup>2</sup> and the decorators of the *Art Nouveau* were proceeding on. Seurat did not abandon his pointillism, but he did abandon that pseudo-classicism which he had displayed in the *Grande Jatte*. Thus in order to understand his personality, we must forget Raphael and Poussin, and frame it by Impressionism, Symbolism and *Art Nouveau*.

The crisis of Impressionism around 1880 caused each Impressionist painter to seek his own individual way, apart from that of his fellows. Monet went toward a symbolic chromatism; Pissarro, toward a new emphasis of the architecture in composition; Renoir, toward selected contour lines; Cézanne, toward a solid construction of volumes. However divergent, these ways had a common ground, the desire for a theoretical basis. No theory had accompanied the creation of Impressionism ten years before. When confronted with the scoffing of the public, of the critics, and of the majority of the artists, Impressionists needed a theory to oppose their enemies. Too discouraged to find a theory of impression-

2. See: G. KAHN on Seurat's adhesion to an idea of Whistler in: *Les Dessins de Georges Seurat*, Paris, 1928.





FIG. 2. — GEORGES SEURAT. — *Les Grues et la Percée. Port-en-Bessin, 1888.* — W. A. Harriman Collection, New York. Courtesy of Mr. Harriman.

ism, they preferred to find as many theories as their individual tendencies required. None of them, neither Cézanne nor Renoir, succeeded in formulating a definite theory. Gauguin was still waiting for Pissarro's revelation of the secret weapon of Cézanne, when the young Seurat entered the field with a theory of his own, well formulated and proud of its scientific basis. The faith in science was

then even greater than it is today. It was only natural that Seurat's theory should have had a tremendous success among the young painters.

Such a theory had two principles: optical mixture and harmony of lines, and one aim: the expression of general sentiments, such as gaiety, peace or sadness. The principles were not new. What was new was their scientific basis, and, above all, Seurat's desire to transform the data of sensibility into scientific ideas.

In 1881, when he was unaware of the very existence of Seurat, Camille Pissarro painted the *Chemin Creux, Vue sur Epluchés*, Göteborg Museum (Fig. 1), which shows a composition very similar to *Les Grues et la Percée, Port-en-Bessin* by Seurat, 1888, W. A. Harriman Collection, New York (Fig. 2). Due to the similarity of these compositions, it is easy to note how Seurat, aiming at abstraction, accentuates the lines, and intensifies the effect of light and shade. Do such accentuations and intensifications hamper the artist's sensibility? On the contrary, it is evident that Seurat's sensibility is more acute than Pissarro's. The "magic light" stresses the foreground's volume, and puts the becalmed sea into the far distance. Between the two there is a contrast similar to that between reality and dreams, with this difference—that both are artistic creations, that is, both belong to an accepted realm of legend which is not to be found in the actual realities and dreams which we experience. In this lies Seurat's poetry. We must admit that without his "method," his poetry could not be realized, that is, without pointillism, the magic of the mountain and the sea, and even more, that of the heavenly sky, would not exist. And thanks to Seurat's linear method, both the structure and the pattern of the mountain emphasize its imaginative quality. But

this is a "method," as Seurat said, not a theory which has its own value *per se*; and a "method" is a way of obtaining something else—the calm energy, the intense life of the mountain, the melancholic fading away of the distant water. In this "something else," not in his "method," lies the art of Seurat.

And now we can go back to the painting of Pissarro, the "Impressionist" Is there more reality here than in Seurat? I would say no. Pissarro's colors and lights are also imaginative, his contrast between the hill in the foreground and the distant plain does, indeed, express a contrast between reality and dream. However, everything is less rigorous, is looser in detail, like the figures or the tree, which are picturesque without being pictorial. This reveals that Pissarro's sensibility is less intense, less concentrated, and that his creative imagination is less coherent, and with a shorter breath, in spite of all his other qualities which are the source of his own greatness and which are due to the very goodness of his nature.

Both paintings are works of art; but in Seurat we sense the exceptional genius. He was a force of nature, and it appears natural that Pissarro should have been compelled to follow him some years later.

*Fishing Fleet at Port-en-Bessin*, about 1888, Museum of Modern Art, New York (Fig. 4), is a landscape far superior to the previous one. It allows us to understand what Seurat meant when he spoke of the "analogy of opposites": the zones of colors may be of light or shadow; may be white or green; however, they belong to the same life of tremulous light; they participate in the same enchanted atmosphere. This man, Seurat, who wants to be fully armed with science, here appears as he is—a dreaming child. A stretch of sand, a shadow of a cloud, a few white sails, are for him motives of astonishment, of ecstasy, of tenderness for everything in nature. As an echo we hear a few of his words: "The ship, which seemed to be asleep, lying on her left side, arose with grace and dignity, only again to lie down gently on her right side. She sails away, she leaves the pier . . . farewell . . ."<sup>3</sup> His subtle calculations of lines and colors are instruments for the revelation of his childlike soul. Thus he is primitive, but not a primitivist; his science is his armor, not against his spontaneous creativeness, but against the pretensions of classicism or academic art. When he has paid his due to mathematical principles, he can proceed to find his intimate self, the pure source of his imagination. He is primitive, because he is pure, free from classicism.

Not always, however, did he succeed in going beyond method and principle. A comparison between the *Landscape of La Grande Jatte*, Chester Beatty Collection, London (Fig. 3), and the *Definite Study for the Composition of "La Grande Jatte,"* Adolph Lewisohn Collection, New York (Fig. 5), will show what Seurat lost by his composition of figures. In the *Landscape* not only is the dis-

3. COQUIOT, *Op. cit.*, pp. 124-125.



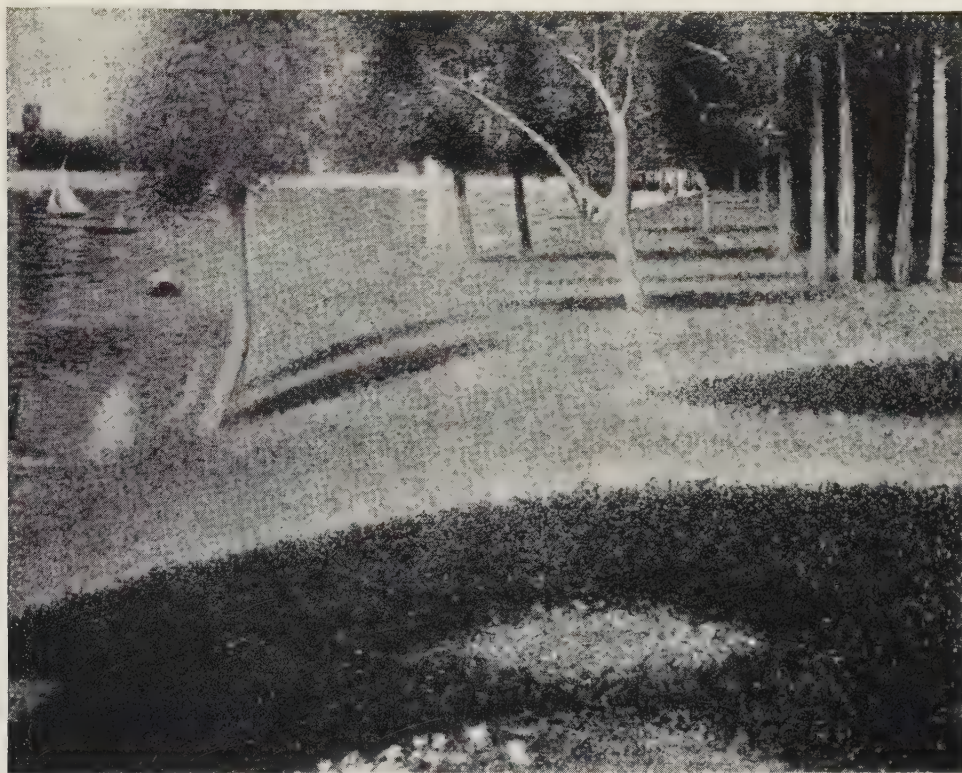


FIG. 3. — GEORGES SEURAT. — Landscape of *La Grande Jatte*. — Chester Beatty Collection, London.

tribution of light and shade natural, and not artificial, not only does the stretch of grass possess a sense of volume which disappears behind the figures, but everything else is extremely sensitive too: look at the tree-trunks, how alive and human they are in the *Landscape*, and how indifferent they appear to be in the composition.

No doubt, in the final painting of *La Grande Jatte*, Art Institute of Chicago, the lines are more definitive and the figures more evident. But is this an artistic *improvement*? The legend, the ecstasy, the tenderness which constitute the art of the landscape, have definitely disappeared. The method and the theory have been coldly and successfully applied, but this does not mean very much to art. However, a new element which could be artistic was introduced in the final painting: it is irony. Seurat felt the ridiculousness of the fashion of his time, and emphasized it forcefully by the rigidity of the poses of the figures. When he painted *La Grande Jatte* he was not fully conscious of his irony; when, later on, he painted *La Parade* or *Le Cirque* such a consciousness was evident. Thus the critical problem of his compositions concerns the quality of his irony. And this is quite poor. We must remember the irony of Toulouse-Lautrec to understand how frozen was Seurat's irony, which could not develop like "a melody

suggesting itself to a musician," but was merely demonstrated through a method of lines.

Thus if we want to find the great artist in Seurat, we must discover the divine child in him, his ecstasies, his enchantment, his poetry.

The motives of his poetry were the effects of light in open country, like the motives of the Impressionists. But he brought to those motives an attitude unknown to all Impressionists, even to Cézanne. It was his rigor, his severity, his austerity, something which has a touch of religious restraint, such as it was possible to find in France among the Jansenists and which he possibly inherited from the mysterious religious endeavour of his father.

Immediately after Seurat's death, the Belgian poet, E. Verhaeren, wrote an article which was later included in his book *Sensations*, 1927, and which is the best introduction to the painter's psychology. "I knew Seurat. He appeared to me timid and silent . . . To hear him explaining and making his confession in front of his year's work was to feel his sincerity and to be conquered by someone able to convince. Calmly, with restrained gestures, his eye never leaving you, and



FIG. 4. — GEORGES SEURAT. — Fishing Fleet at Port-en-Bessin. — Museum of Modern Art, New York.  
Courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.





FIG. 5. — GEORGES SEURAT. — Definite study for the composition of *La Grande Jatte*. — Adolph Lewisohn Collection, New York.

his slow and unemphatic speech seeking rather didactic words, he showed his results, his well-founded principles, what he called—the basis. Then he asked your opinion, took you as a witness, and awaited the word which would indicate that you had understood. He was very modest, almost fearful, even though one felt his silent pride. Instead of attacking other artists, he even admitted he admired them when in his heart he did not. He was humble and without jealousy.”

Professorial, desirous of following well-founded principles, he was silently proud, timid, modest and generous. When the professor in him, the theorist, or his *esprit de système* and pride in his science prevailed, his effort showed on his canvases, and these are less successful. But the majority of his works—particularly his landscapes—reveal his absorption in ecstasies, due to his silence, timidity, modesty and generosity. Then the touch of his brush is small, not by rule, but by his need of delicacy and nuance; light envelops everything, not by calculation, but by spontaneous generosity. He feels that light caressing nature becomes a phosphorescent mist. Then he creates his masterpieces. He marvels like a child, at what he sees, and expresses his astonishment, which precedes understanding and love. If a spiritual affinity must be found in the past, it is not with Raphael, but Fra Angelico, as has already been pointed out. Like Italian Primitives, Seurat can obey all rules; his soul is too pure to be affected by rules. This purity, full

of charm and grace, is the art of Seurat.

If we understand his creative power in this way, we can also clearly see the merit of his method and theory, his abstract lines and pointillism. He needed well-founded principles, because he was timid. Without a set rule, he did not dare to approach nature. And in order to be sure that he was clinging to his rule he only asked to fulfill it, and did not admit that he had ever reached something else. The more his mind concentrated on his calculations, the more spontaneously and unexpectedly did this "something else" appear on the canvas. This was his poetry, the poetry which he denied. The very quality of his imagination saved him from falling into merely the demonstration of "method." On the other hand, it was his method, and his well-founded principles, which gave Seurat the courage to reveal to others, more than to himself, his own humanity.

December 28, 1944.

LIONELLO VENTURI.





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